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WASHINGTON IRVING.

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AMERICAN AUTHORS.

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WASHINGTON IRVING.

BY

DAVID J. HILL,

PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSITY AT LEWISBURG; AUTHOR OF "ELEMENTS OF RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION," AND "SCIENCE OF RHETORIC."

With Portrait on Steel.

NEW YORK:
SHELDON AND COMPANY.
1879.

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PREFACE.

"WHAT is your first remark," says Taine, "on turning over the great stiff leaves of a folio, the yellow sheets of a manuscript, — a poem, a code of laws, a confession of faith? This, you say, did not come into existence all alone. It is but a mould, like a fossil shell, an imprint, like one of those shapes embossed in stone by an animal which lived and perished. Under the shell there was an animal, and behind the document there was a MAN. Why do you study the shell, except to bring before you the animal? So you study the document only to know the man. The shell and the document are lifeless wrecks, valuable only as a clew to the entire and living existence. We must get hold of this existence, endeavor to recreate it. It is a mistake to study the document as if it were isolated. This were to treat things like a simple scholar, to fall into the error of the bibliomaniac."[1]

The brilliant French critic above quoted has stated an important truth, but has claimed for biography more than is due. Truth and beauty, the two chief powers

[1] English Literature, vol. i. pp. 1, 2.

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of literature, are absolute, and independent of the man who discovers them, and embodies them in language. We do not "study the document *only* to know the man;" yet "it is a mistake to study the document as if it were isolated." The document and the man mutually interpret each other, and we know neither in its totality until we know both.

The series of biographies, of which this volume is the first, aims to furnish an introduction to our leading American authors. It, however, is a series of introductions merely. Its usefulness may well be questioned if it practically ends in satisfying the wants of the public. Should it excite an interest in the masterpieces of American letters, by developing an interest in our best writers, my purpose will be attained, but not otherwise. That the series will have the desired tendency, especially among the young, is confidently believed. It is not designed for the educated so much as for those who need information as well as criticism; yet it is hoped that the volumes may be found useful as compendiums for all classes of readers.

The chief source of information regarding the subject of this sketch is the "Life and Letters" by Pierre M. Irving. No biography of Irving could be written that would not be greatly indebted to this charming work. Its extent, however (it being in four octavo volumes), has rendered it less popular than it deserves to be. By the courtesy of the publishers, G. P. Putnam's Sons, I have made some extracts from Irving's correspondence, which greatly enrich the present sketch.

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Excepting in the last chapter, which is a critique on the man and his writings, I have not ventured to express critical opinions, preferring to cite the best authorities.

The INDEX OF NAMES, and the CHRONOLOGY OF IRVING'S LIFE, are inserted for convenience.

DAVID J. HILL.

UNIVERSITY AT LEWISBURG,
November, 1878.

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THE CHRONOLOGY OF IRVING'S LIFE.

		DATE.
Washington Irving born	April	3, 1783
Enters Masterton's Law Office		1799
Embarks for Europe	May	19, 1804
Arrives in Rome	March	27, 1805
Arrives in New York	March	22, 1806
First Number of "Salmagundi" published .	Jan.	24, 1807
Death of his Father	Oct.	25, 1807
Last Number of "Salmagundi" published .	Jan.	25, 1808
Death of Miss Matilda Hoffman	April	26, 1809
Knickerbocker's "History of New York" published	Dec.	6, 1809
Partnership with Peter proposed	May	31, 1810
Edits the "Analectic Magazine"		1812
Made Colonel in the Army	Aug.,	1814
Second Embarkation for Europe	May	25, 1815
Visits Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford . .	Sept.,	1817
Bankruptcy of P. Irving & Co.	Jan.	27, 1818
Offer of Clerkship in Navy Department . .	Oct.,	1818
First Number of "The Sketch-Book" published	May	15, 1819
Murray's Refusal to publish "The Sketch-Book"	Oct.	27, 1819
Murray publishes "The Sketch-Book" . .	March,	1820
Residence in Paris begins	Aug.	17, 1820
Last Number of "The Sketch-Book" published	Sept.	13, 1820
Meeting with Thomas Moore	Dec.,	1820
Return to England	July	11, 1821
Death of William Irving	Nov.	9, 1821

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	DATE.
"Bracebridge Hall" published	May 23, 1822
Tour in Germany begun	July, 1822
Leaves Dresden for Paris	July 12, 1823
"Tales of a Traveller" published . . .	Aug. 25, 1824
Arrival at Madrid, on First Visit . . .	Feb. 14, 1826
"Life of Columbus" published . . .	Feb. 11, 1828
Visit to Grenada.	March, 1828
Arrival in Seville	April, 1828
Visit to Palos	Aug., 1828
Diploma of the Royal Academy of History bestowed	Jan., 1829
"Conquest of Grenada" published . .	April, 1829
Residence in the Alhambra	May–July, 1829
Appointed Secretary of Legation at London .	July, 1829
Medal of the Royal Society of Literature bestowed.	April, 1830
The Degree of LL.D. bestowed at Oxford .	June, 1831
Appointed *Chargé d'Affaires* at London. .	June, 1831
Retires from the Legation.	Sept., 1831
Visits to Newstead Abbey	Oct. and Dec., 1831
Edits Bryant's Poems	Jan., 1832
Arrival in America	May 21, 1832
"Alhambra" published (in America) . .	June, 1832
Tour in the West	Sept.–Nov., 1832
"Tour on the Prairies" published . . .	April, 1835
Purchase of Sunnyside	April, 1835
"Astoria" published	Oct., 1836
"Captain Bonneville's Adventures" published	March, 1837
Death of John T. Irving	March 15, 1838
Correspondence with Prescott	Dec., 1838
Contributes to "The Knickerbocker Magazine"	March, 1839
Nominated as Minister to Spain . . .	Feb. 10, 1842
The Dickens Dinner	Feb., 1842
Embarkation for Europe	April 10, 1842
Arrives at Madrid	July 25, 1842
Visits France	Sept. 7, 1843
Returns to Madrid	Dec. 1, 1843
Visits Barcelona.	June 26, 1844

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		DATE.
Visits France again	July	29, 1844
Returns to Madrid	Nov.,	1844
Resigns his Mission	Dec.,	1845
Leaves Madrid	July,	1846
Arrives at Sunnyside	Sept.	19, 1846
Makes Mr. Putnam his publisher . . .	July	26, 1848
Joins the Episcopal Church	Sept., (?)	1848
"Life of Goldsmith" published . . .	Sept.,	1849
"Life of Mahomet" published (1st vol.) . .	Dec.,	1849
"Life of Mahomet" published (2d vol.) . .	April,	1850
Visits Washington	Jan.,	1853
Returns to Sunnyside	March,	1853
Visits Virginia	June,	1853
Travels in New-York State	Aug.,	1853
Visits Virginia again	Oct.,	1853
Visits Willis at Idlewild	Aug.,	1854
"Wolfert's Roost" published	Feb.,	1855
"Life of Washington" published (1st vol.) .	May,	1855
"Life of Washington" published (2d vol.) .	Dec.,	1855
"Life of Washington" published (3d vol.) .	July,	1856
"Life of Washington" published (4th vol.) .	May,	1857
"Life of Washington" published (5th vol.) .	April,	1859
Death of Irving	Nov.	28, 1859
Burial	Dec.	1, 1859

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CHRONOLOGY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE.

	BORN.	DIED.
JONATHAN EDWARDS	1703	1758
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN	1706	1790
TIMOTHY DWIGHT	1752	1817
JOSEPH DENNIE	1768	1812
CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN	1771	1810
JAMES KIRKE PAULDING	1779	1860
WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING	1780	1842
WASHINGTON IRVING	1783	1859
RICHARD HENRY DANA	1787	—
JAMES FENIMORE COOPER	1789	1851
FITZ-GREENE HALLECK	1790	1867
WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT	1794	1878
JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE	1820	1867
WILLIAM HICKLING PRESCOTT	1796	1859
GEORGE BANCROFT	1800	—
RALPH WALDO EMERSON	1803	—
NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE	1804	1864
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW	1807	—
JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER	1808	—
EDGAR ALLAN POE	1809	1849
OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES	1809	—
JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY	1814	1877
JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL	1819	—
BAYARD TAYLOR	1825	1878

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LIFE OF WASHINGTON IRVING.

CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE AND EARLY LIFE.

1783-1804.

NEAR the close of the last century, Horace Walpole wrote these words: "The next Augustan age will dawn on the other side of the Atlantic. There will, perhaps, be a Thucydides at Boston, a Xenophon at New York, and, in time, a Virgil in Mexico, and a Newton in Peru." In the following pages we propose to tell the story of the first American, who, in the character and extent of his writings, promised a fulfilment of Walpole's prophecy.

Washington Irving was born on the 3d of April, 1783, in the city of New York. He was the youngest of eleven children, eight of whom reached the age of maturity. His parents were reared at the opposite extremes of Great Britain, — his father in the Orkney Isles, his mother in Cornwall. His

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ancestors on his father's side were an ancient and historic family, tracing back their lineage through the Irwyns[1] of Drum in Scotland to the heroic age of Robert Bruce. The old estate is still held by the Irvings; and the venerable tower of Drum still stands, the oldest inhabited dwelling in Scotland.

William Irving, Washington's father, early acquired a passion for the sea. After the death of his mother, who had restrained his desire, he enlisted on an armed packet in the service of the king. During the struggle between France and England he rose to the position of a subordinate officer, and sailed between the Old World and the New. Having met with Sarah Sanders, an English curate's grand-daughter, he brought her to this country in 1763, two years after their marriage.

The young pair settled in New York, and Mr. Irving became a merchant in that city. At the outbreak of the Revolution he was compelled to abandon a successful business, and fled with other refugees to Rahway, N. J. Here he suffered much, his business being destroyed, and his family afflicted with fever and ague. After an absence of two years he returned to New York, then almost ruined by fire, and resumed his business. During the remainder of the struggle for independence he was

[1] The family name has been variously written Irwyn, Irvin, Erwyne, De Irwin, Irvine, and Irving.

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a warm friend of the patriot cause, and a devoted helper of the suffering prisoners. His wife was his rival in beneficence, and was known as a lady of distinguished virtue.

New York was at that time a town of twenty thousand inhabitants, whose dwellings clustered near the Battery, leaving the present site of the City Hall an open common, beyond which the green fields stretched away to the north and west. Traces of the old Dutch life, which Irving afterwards painted, were still seen in the houses of yellow bricks imported from Holland, the quaint gables facing the street, and numerous old-time customs inherited from the golden age of Wouter Von Twiller. The hills along the Hudson and the East River, now populous with thriving cities, were then cultivated fields, dotted picturesquely with low Dutch cottages and haystacks. The farmers crossed the river to market in row-boats, and smoked their long pipes about the docks. In the neighboring country the traditional customs of New Amsterdam were still prevalent. The sober descendant of the Stuyvesants, the Cortlandts, and the Ten Broecks, religiously nailed the protecting horseshoe over his barn-door to guard against witches and goblins, read his Bible in the language of his fathers, and listened to long sermons in the same venerated tongue.

After his return to the city, Mr. Irving moved

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into a two-story dwelling at No. 131 William Street, where his illustrious son first saw the light. Within a year, however, business proved so prosperous, that the young Scotch merchant bought a good property across the street, at No. 128, for two thousand pounds. In this second home, once the dépôt of a British commissary, young Irving passed his youth; and round it clustered all the sacred recollections of infancy and childhood. When advanced in life, he would tell, with a shudder at his hardihood, how, when an adventurous youth, he would crawl up the steep roof of the old house, leap to the roof of a neighboring building, drop a stone down a chimney, and steal back to laugh over the wonder his trick would cause the inmates of the house.

William Irving was a godly man, a Presbyterian by faith and inheritance. There was enough of the Scotch Covenanters' blood in his veins to make him a strict parent; and his children, in spite of his own personal piety, gathered the impression that "every thing that was pleasant was wicked." But the eleven children born under his roof, though three were taken away in infancy, would defy even a Covenanter's sternness; and William Irving's house, though well ruled, was full of joy and home-bred jollity.

When his infant son was but a few months old, and Mr. Irving was wondering what name to make

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immortal, General Washington entered the city of New York, a conqueror at the head of his army. There was but one name that an infant so fortunate as to be nameless at such a time could have; and so, in the Episcopal chapel of St. George, in Beekman Street, but at the hands of a Presbyterian minister, the child was christened WASHINGTON IRVING.

When, some time afterwards, as president of the new republic, General Washington returned to New York, the temporary seat of government, his infant namesake had the honor of an interview. The Scotch servant Lizzie, proud of her *protégé*, carried him in his first trousers to see the general. Following him into a store, she told him that here — pointing to the junior Washington — was a "bairn" named after him. The great and good man placed his hand tenderly upon the boy's head, and kindly blessed him.

Young Irving's education seems to have owed little to his teachers. In his fourth year he fathomed the mysteries of the alphabet under a Mrs. Kilmaster, who kept a school in Ann Street. During two years he advanced little beyond learning his letters.

His second teacher was a Revolutionary soldier, a man of small scholarship, but a rigid disciplinarian, — Benjamin Romaine. Irving continued in his school until he was fourteen; and was a pet

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of the veteran, who displayed his fondness in a military way by calling him "general." In Romaine's school "horsing" was the favorite punishment. Such is its nature that the girls were dismissed, and the penalty was inflicted in presence of the boys alone. Compassion was so strong in Irving's breast, that he chose to retire with the girls, rather than witness the infliction of pain; and this was permitted, out of deference to his feelings. At school he was known as a gentle, truthful boy, and the busiest reader of all.

Indeed, it was to his books, rather than to his instructors, that he owed his mental development. Reading was, with him, a controlling passion. His interest was so great, that he often concealed a book of travels or of history beneath his desk during the hours of study in school. His master, Romaine, once detected him with a book in his hand, and was about to punish him, when, noticing its excellent character, he complimented him on his taste as he rebuked the offence. Among his favorites, a translation of "Orlando Furioso," "Robinson Crusoe," "Sinbad the Sailor," and especially "The World Displayed," in twenty handy volumes, are mentioned. Books of travel, voyages, and adventures, had a charm that he could not resist. A longing for the sea grew out of his reading. He himself afterwards wrote, "How wistfully would I wander about the pier-

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heads in fine weather, and watch the parting ships bound to distant climes! With what longing eyes would I gaze after their lessening sails, and waft myself in imagination to the ends of the earth!"[1] But the stern Scotch parent took care that these longings should not ripen into action, and so saved his boy from possible ruin.

There was one passion, however, that paternal authority could not suppress. Though the use of candles after bedtime was forbidden, they were secreted in his bedroom for use when the parental eye was closed in sleep.

Next to reading, writing was Irving's favorite pastime. At school he was famous for his readiness in composing. Mathematical studies were his special object of dislike, and he would sometimes exchange essays with other lads for a slate full of sums in arithmetic. His fondness for writing displayed itself at the age of thirteen in a drama, which was privately acted in the presence of a professional actress. His desire to write a play was fostered by an occasional visit to the theatre, where he first went with James K. Paulding, his early friend and companion. His admiration for the drama never wholly left him; though he thought so slightly of his own early performance, that he finally forgot, not only its substance, but even its very name.

[1] Sketch-Book, Introduction.

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At sixteen Irving's school-days were over. His brothers, Peter and John, had attended Columbia College; and why Washington did not is not explained. It is certain, that, later in life, his failure to take a collegiate course was the source of much regret.

After leaving school he began the study of law in the office of Henry Masterton, with whom his brother John also was engaged. The two years spent in Mr. Masterton's office were not very devotedly given to purely legal studies. *Belles-lettres* had a far greater charm for Irving than the abstract principles of the law or the formulas of the courts. His best efforts were put forth upon Swift and Goldsmith, rather than upon Blackstone and the statutes.

Among the popular books at the time were the novels of Fielding, Richardson, and Smollett; the poems of Goldsmith, Cowper, and Burns; and the essays of Johnson, Addison, and Sterne. Burke's speeches were still occupying the thoughts of men, and Hannah More was a popular writer. The letters of Junius were puzzling the minds of the inquisitive, and were prized for the brilliancy of their style by all the theorists about their authorship. Scott was publishing his poems, but had not appeared as a writer of prose romance. Though these were no mean models, Irving delighted most in the more ancient masters, and communed with

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Chaucer and Spenser and Shakespeare as his almost daily companions. From these perennial fountains of literature he drew his inspirations. To this source is to be traced that archaic quality of his style which makes him seem to belong to an earlier period than he does, and which, in "Bracebridge Hall," becomes almost an anachronism. Hence also he probably derived that musical flow of language that so often reminds us of

> "The old melodious lays
> Which softly melt the ages through, —
> The songs of Spenser's golden days,
> Arcadian Sidney's silvery phrase,
> Sprinkling our noon of time with freshest morning dew."

About this period Irving made a journey that ever lingered in his memory as one of the most delightful incidents of his life. He had relatives in the vicinity of Albany, then the centre of a romantic wilderness; and he was permitted to visit them, taking passage on the Hudson. Previous to this he had never been much from home, a holiday among the hills of Westchester and a few days in the wilds of Sleepy Hollow being his only adventures out of the city. His young imagination went out beyond the mysterious Highlands with a burning desire to realize its own pictures of the wonder-land to the north. His trunk, he tells us, was packed and unpacked many times before the happy day arrived. At last he took

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passage in a Dutch sloop under a Dutch captain, whose sailors were all his own negro slaves. Irving has happily left us an account of that first voyage up the Hudson, — the noble river that afterwards became so dear to him, and which he has make so attractive to every reader of "The Sketch-Book." His quick eye was on the watch for every thing of interest, from the negroes' conceit of their sailor-craft to the grandeur of the solemn mountains. He tells how he was impressed with the noble Highlands, with their forest-crowned cliffs and screaming eagles, their dashing streams and whippoorwills' songs.

"But of all the scenery of the Hudson," he says, "the Kaatskill Mountains had the most witching effect on my boyish imagination. Never shall I forget the effect upon me of the first view of them, predominating over a wide extent of country, part wild, woody, and rugged; part softened away into all the graces of cultivation. As we slowly floated along, I lay on the deck, and watched them through a long summer's day undergoing a thousand mutations under the magical effects of the atmosphere, — sometimes seeming to approach, at other times to recede; now almost melting into hazy distance, now burnished by the setting sun; until in the evening they printed themselves against the glowing sky in the deep purple of an Italian landscape."[1]

[1] Life and Letters, vol. i. pp. 42, 43.

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During his entire life the Hudson never lost this fascinating spell over the mind of Irving, and its "storied associations" were among his happiest recollections.

In 1801 Irving entered the law-office of Brockholst Livingston; and when, a year later, that distinguished jurist became a judge of the Supreme Court of his State, Irving continued his studies with Josiah Ogden Hoffman.

Mr. Hoffman and his family soon became ardent admirers of the genial young student, and their home was the scene of many social pleasures.

Soon after this last connection, Irving made a second trip up the Hudson. This journey was less delightful than the first, owing to physical distress. His letters at this time foreboded the pulmonary trouble that finally compelled him to seek relief in foreign travel. So serious was his cough, that Judge Kent, afterward Chancellor, predicted his early death; but the judge was permitted to preside at a dinner given in Irving's honor thirty years afterward.

After his return to New York he began a series of humorous sketches for "The Morning Chronicle," a daily paper just started by his brother Peter. These contributions were written under the signature of Jonathan Oldstyle. Though only nineteen years of age, the writer won the attention of the contemporary press; and his articles

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were extensively copied by other journals. Among other marks of attention they gained for him a visit from Charles Brockden Brown, the first professional novelist in this country. Brown detected in these first-fruits of Irving's genius that delicate pungency of satire and attractive beauty of form which mark his later productions. Brown tried, but in vain, to engage his pen in the service of "The Literary Magazine and American Register," which he had just begun in Philadelphia. The "Oldstyle Papers" were republished years afterward, during the period of Irving's growing fame, but without his consent. He never regarded them as worthy of a place among his collected writings.

During the second summer of Irving's connection with Mr. Hoffman, a memorable journey was projected. That gentleman owned a tract of wild land on the St. Lawrence, near Ogdensburg, or Oswegatchie as it was called by its early inhabitants. The month of July was chosen for a visit to this romantic region, where, at that time, few human beings except Indians could be found. The party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Hoffman, Mr. and Mrs. Ludlow Ogden, two young ladies, and Irving. Proceeding to Albany on a sloop, the remainder of the journey was made in wagons and in small river-boats. Irving kept a journal of their adventures, and it is a graphic picture of travel in those early days. His fair compan-

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ions seem to have enjoyed their hardships; for there is no mention of complaint.

In the course of their journey they were obliged to seek shelter in a house kept by a "little squat French woman," and so filthy, that Irving scribbled over the fireplace the following epigram: —

> "Here sovereign Dirt erects her sable throne;
> The house, the host, the hostess, all her own."

"In a subsequent year," writes Irving's biographer, "when Mr. Hoffman was passing the same way with Judge Cooper, the father of the distinguished novelist James Fenimore Cooper, he pointed out this memento of his student, still undetected and uneffaced: whereupon the judge, whose longer experience in frontier travel had probably raised him above qualms of over-nicety, immediately wrote under it this doggerel inculcation: —

> 'Learn hence, young man, and teach it to your sons,
> The wisest way's to take it as it comes.'"[1]

After leaving the "Temple of Dirt," as the party humorously dubbed their wretched lodging-place, they proceeded over rugged and miry roads through the wilderness. The horses were mired; the rain descended in torrents; the wind blew a perfect hurricane; and the heroic ladies, for once, were alarmed. Night brought them to a hut less

[1] Life and Letters, vol. i. p. 51.

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than twenty feet square, containing but one room, where fifteen people — the party and some rough ox-drivers — spent the night. The rude drivers drank liquor and played cards until they were sleepy with play and alcohol; and Irving describes one of them as "the most impudent, chattering, forward scoundrel" he had ever known. When these beastly woodmen were at length lost in the slumbers of intoxication, Irving gallantly held an umbrella over the faces of the sleeping ladies; while, in the silence of the night, falling trees crashed and wolves howled drearily around the half-open hut.

Pleasant days, however, were in reserve for the party; and fishing, shooting, and rowing rewarded their hardihood in risking the dangers of the forest.

During their stay in this region, one incident occurred, that Mr. Hoffman never failed to bring to Irving's attention on occasions when it was most provoking. In company with the son of Mr. Hoffman's agent, he visited the wigwam of an Indian to hire a boat for the trip down the river. On their arrival the owner of the bateau was absent, but soon came in half intoxicated with his squaw, a somewhat pretty woman. She had shared the potations of her husband, and was in a condition to be familiar with the handsome pale-face. She sat down by Irving, and began a flirtation that was by

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no means pleasing to her dusky mate, who sat drawn up in his blanket, glaring jealously at the pair. Finally he rose with a spring, and smote Irving — whose surprise was only equalled by his innocence — a blow on the head that felled him to the earth. Concluding that discretion was the better part of valor, Irving retired from the scene; while the Indian ejaculated with bitterness, "He — damned Yankee!" Poor Irving was often reminded of his attempt to steal the heart of the pretty squaw.

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CHAPTER II.

ACROSS THE ATLANTIC.

1804-1806.

DURING Irving's second trip up the Hudson, signs of broken health had awakened the solicitude of his friends. When he became of age, in April, 1804, his generous brother William began to be alarmed for his safety, and planned a foreign trip as a means of restoration to health. His father, who had become paralytic, had amassed a moderate fortune by his business, and was able to indulge his son in this luxury. His brothers gladly consented that the means be furnished for this purpose; and William, nearly seventeen years his senior, and so almost a father in his influence upon the others, urged that Washington should visit the south of Europe.

Irving took passage for Bordeaux on the 19th of May, only a few months after his twenty-first birthday. He was in a delicate condition of health at the time of sailing; and the captain said

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to himself, as Irving came over the ship's side, that the young chap would go overboard before they reached France.

The young traveller's feelings, as he saw the quaint roofs and familiar spires of his native city fading in the distance, were by no means cheerful. Nor was a transatlantic voyage in those days what it is in ours. There were seventeen in the small cabin, besides the master and the mates; and the efforts at cleanliness were by no means strenuous. Yet the voyage was an easy one; and Irving in his round jacket and loose trousers emulated more experienced sailors by climbing to the masthead, and taking the fresh ocean-breeze.

It is fortunate for all lovers of personal narrative that Irving was fond of writing letters and keeping a journal. His letters and diary are detailed and graphic, and from them we may learn of every object and occurrence that met his sight. His letters to William, for whom he had the most tender affection, are a series of pictures of his daily experience. In his "Life and Letters" his nephew has made excellent use of these papers from his own hand. Our space will not permit us to use them, except to the slightest extent.

After touching the coast of Spain, where he heard that Bonaparte had been declared Emperor of the French, he landed at Bordeaux on the 30th of June, having been on the ocean exactly six weeks.

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Shortly after his arrival, while proceeding through the south of France to Nice, he met a very curious travelling companion. This singular and ubiquitous person was an American doctor of medicine from Lancaster, Penn., named Dr. Henry. The doctor was a short, thick-set man, a master of the French language, and bearing trophies of his travels of a most interesting character, — such as a snuff-box presented by Lavater, and a breastpin from the Abbé Winckelmann.

Garrulous and peculiar as the little doctor was, he was a generous-hearted gentleman; and his perfect acquaintance with European travel was of vast service to the inexperienced youth.

Irving had acquired at Bordeaux, during six weeks of study, a sufficient knowledge of the French language to enable him to converse without great embarrassment; but his bad French was nevertheless a source of amusement to the country people, with whom he conversed with great freedom.

He relates in a letter to William an amusing trick of the little doctor's while they were strolling together through the town of Tonneins. The pair entered a house where some girls were quilting, who hospitably gave Irving a needle to try his hand. Much merriment ensued; and the young ladies were plainly interested in the handsome young American, notwithstanding his imperfect

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French. Finally the little doctor told them that Irving was an English prisoner, whom a French officer that was with them had in custody. Their glee at once gave way to pity, and they began to show a tender interest in his future. "What will they do with him?" was the eager question. "Oh! nothing but shoot him, or cut off his head," replied the teasing doctor. And thus they left the poor girls in great distress that the young man should have so sad a fate. Years afterwards Irving purposely passed through the same town, and, though an American plenipotentiary, looked out of his carriage to see the house with the interest of a boy.

His facetious companion, who did so much to enliven the journey, soon parted company with him; though he subsequently rejoined him several times, turning up in the most unexpected places. His value was at once appreciated when his assistance could no longer be relied on. Poor Irving had imperfect passports, was tracked and persecuted by spies, suspected of being an Englishman, and at length shut up in Nice when exceedingly anxious to proceed to Italy. Finally the little doctor again came to his aid, and sent Irving certificates from Hall Storm, the American vice-consul at Genoa, and an old schoolmate of Irving's. Even then his troubles were not at an end; for he was forced to wait for a passport from Paris.

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After five weeks of detention, Irving embarked in a felucca for Genoa. On the way the vessel was suspected of being a privateer, and was fired upon as such, but without injury. At Genoa he was warmly welcomed by Storm, who was his constant companion. His friend had the acquaintance of many of the leading families in the city; and the young American was at once introduced into the most fashionable Genoese society, and was received with great cordiality. He even had the good fortune to be presented to the Doge on his levee night by his nephew, Signor Lerra. His departure from this city was not without sadness; for he had found it a home in the heart of a strange land.

Irving took passage from Genoa to Sicily with a Yankee captain named Strong, a pious man of many amusing eccentricities. In passing the Island of Planosa, a shelter of the "banditti of the ocean," who then infested the Mediterranean, the vessel was overhauled by one of these pirates. Irving, who could now speak French with considerable facility, acted as interpreter, and was taken on board the privateer. He describes the crew as the most villanous-looking he had ever beheld. "Their dark complexions, rough beards, and fierce black eyes scowling under enormous bushy eyebrows, gave a character of the greatest ferocity to their countenances. They were as rudely

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accoutred as their comrades that had boarded us, and, like them, armed with cutlasses, stilettos, and pistols. They seemed to regard us with the most malignant looks; and I thought I could perceive a sinister smile upon their countenances, as if triumphing over us who had fallen so easily into their hands." [1] After ransacking the ship, and finding no money, of which they were in search, they carried off some wine, and about half the provisions, without inflicting personal injury. After her escape from the pirates, the vessel on which Irving sailed lay becalmed near the scene of the adventure; and the joy of the crew, that they had avoided the knife of the ruffians, was moderated by the apprehension that they might return in the night while inflamed with wine, and murder them wantonly.

At Messina the vessel was quarantined for twenty-one days; though there was no disease on board, nor had the ship touched at any infected port. Irving procured books from shore, and spent his time in trying to master the Italian language; varying his occupation by listening to lectures by the pious captain on Methodism and lunar observations, and a demonstration that the Roman Church is the great beast of Revelation.

From Messina Irving took passage to Syracuse in the American man-of-war "Nautilus."

[1] Life and Letters, vol. i. p. 97.

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On the way he passed through Charybdis, celebrated in classic story. He regarded it as contemptible in appearance beside our own Hell Gate, though it made a "heavy broken sea."

At Syracuse he saw several of the American ships that had been sent against Tripoli, and made the acquaintance of their officers. These proved to be genial companions during his stay on the island. With several of them he explored the celebrated Ear of Dionysius, and found its reported acoustic powers to be real; though he did not fully believe that it had been used for the purpose that tradition assigns to it. He visited the Fountain of Arethusa, and found it the resort of "half-naked nymphs busily employed in washing." The ancient theatre and temples and aqueduct occupied his attention; and, though not a classical scholar, he seems to have known something of antiquities.

In company with Captain Hall of "The President," he made an excursion into the interior of the island, well equipped, to guard against the banditti with which the county was infested.

At the town of Termini, on the coast, an incident occurred that savored of romance. Having reached the place after dark, and being fatigued with the day's journey, Irving and Hall took lodgings at an inn. Having fallen asleep, he was awakened by the sound of voices in the apart-

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ment. Hall, seeing that he was awake, informed him that there was to be a ball that evening, and that a gentleman in the mask of a Turk had invited them to attend. After some demur, the young men decided to go; and Irving assumed the *rôle* of a naval officer, wearing one of Hall's coats; for the ball was to be a carnival masquerade. At the appointed time their unknown guide called to conduct them to the ballroom. To their inexpressible surprise they were led up the stairs of a stately mansion, past liveried servants, into a magnificent apartment decorated with every ornament that wealth could procure or taste suggest, and brought to a stand in the presence of the master of the entertainment. The pretended Turk was the only masked person in the room, and he stood silently by without a word of explanation. Irving and his companion were covered with confusion, and stammered out an apology in broken Italian. Their host graciously informed them that he was the Baron of Palmeria, and inquired who was their conductor. They could make no answer. The baron gave them a welcome, however, and the Turk whispered an explanation. Their host then told them that the man with a mask was a teacher who instructed his daughters in English, and had taken the liberty to bring the travellers, because they were Englishmen, to his palace. The folding-doors suddenly

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flew open, the ball commenced, and the young men found themselves in a scene that soon absorbed them in its whirl of pleasure.

Leaving Sicily from the port of Palermo, he proceeded to Naples in a small fruit-boat, and suffered much inconvenience in an attempt to avoid the Tripolitan cruisers that hovered about the Italian coasts. As he entered the Bay of Naples he beheld the flaming Vesuvius, which had been for some time in a state of eruption. He subsequently paid a visit to the crater, and approached so near the stream of fire that he could touch it with his walking-stick. His curiosity nearly cost him his life; and he escaped the sulphurous vapors that almost choked him, only by a fortunate change of the wind.

At Rome, which he next visited, he made the acquaintance of a young American painter whose companionship afforded him even more delight than all the memorials of classic civilization,—Washington Allston, of South Carolina. Mr. Allston was three years his senior, a man of fine taste and good education. Irving was captivated with him. He says that "his conversation was copious, animated, and highly graphic, warmed by a genial sensibility and benevolence, and enlivened by a chaste and gentle humor."

Allston was an enthusiast in his profession, and seemed to Irving, amid the ideal surroundings of

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Italian scenery and the treasures of artistic genius, the very spirit of art incarnate. The art-galleries were visited in his company, and Irving was taught how to see them to the best advantage. "Study the choice pieces in each collection," said Allston, "look upon none else, and you will afterwards find them hanging up in your memory."

In one of their rambles, Irving, charmed with the young painter, the delightful landscapes of Italy, and the masterpieces of genius scattered on every side, felt a strong impulse to remain in Rome, make Allston his constant companion, and devote himself to the profession of painting. His friend gladly encouraged the plan; and no doubt with some reason; for Irving had skill in drawing, and was finely sensitive to color. The entrancing prospect of life in Rome with Allston was soon superseded by more serious reflections, and the thought lingered in Irving's memory only as a beautiful dream.

During his stay in Rome he met the banker Torlonia,— who supposed that he was a relative of General Washington, — the Baron von Humboldt, and Madame de Staël. Humboldt was then minister of Prussia at the court of Rome, and Madame de Staël had written "Delphine." Irving was charmed with her grace and the flow of her conversation.

Having remained in Rome long enough to wit-

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ness the ceremonies of Passion Week, Irving set out for Bologna. On his way he passed troops of French soldiers who were gathering to celebrate the coronation of Bonaparte as King of Lombardy. From Bologna he proceeded to Milan, passing through a region then infested with banditti, and having great trouble about his passports because of the unsettled state of affairs. So surfeited was he with sight-seeing, that the rich art-treasures of this city were of no interest to him; and the only object that he cared to see, the great cathedral, he was not permitted to enter, as it was in a state of preparation for the crowning of Napoleon. From Milan he continued his journey through Switzerland to Paris, where he arrived on the 24th of May.

During his residence of four months in Paris Irving kept no journal, and even his letters were less full and frequent than before. He seems to have been so entranced with the numberless attractions of the French capital, that he could find "neither time nor inclination to begin so endless a subject." He says, in describing his impressions of the city, "Of all the places that I have seen in Europe, Paris is the most fascinating; and I am well satisfied, that, for pleasure and amusement, it must leave London far behind." He was especially pleased with the Parisian opera, a form of entertainment for which he acquired while in Italy a

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peculiar fondness, which he retained to the end of his life. His delight with the metropolis of pleasure is naively suggested in his apology to his brother for the brevity of his letters, — that he was "a *young man*, and in *Paris*."

While in Paris, Irving made many friends among the American residents, having constant access to the office of the American minister and the free use of American newspapers there. Among his most intimate companions was Vanderlyn, a young painter sent out by the Academy of Fine Arts to secure casts and other art-treasures. A crayon-drawing of Irving by the hand of Vanderlyn, made in 1805, enables us to learn what manner of man he was at this time. The portrait represents him with a long and somewhat angular chin, a finely-cut mouth, a long aquiline nose, a bright full eye, delicately pencilled eyebrows, a high full forehead somewhat concealed by the falling hair which was short and slightly curling, and light side-whiskers. His passports show that his height was five feet seven inches, his hair chestnut, and his eyes blue. Altogether he was an attractive, if not a handsome, young man; and his travels had imparted an ease and grace to his manners that gave an impression of courtly breeding.

Leaving Paris near the end of September, Irving passed through the Netherlands in company with some American gentlemen, and sailed from Rotter-

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dam to London. He had contemplated a brief trip to points of interest in Holland; but dreading detention in those days of political uncertainty, and hearing that Prussia was about to declare in favor of France, he departed at once, lest the Prussian line of vessels on which he expected to take passage might cease to be sent to England.

Owing to a failure to receive the letters of introduction that were looked for, he found himself almost alone in London. He spent his time mostly in the theatres and on the streets. He saw John Kemble, Cooke, and Mrs. Siddons, and wrote his impressions of them in detail. Kemble's acting he felt to be powerful in parts, but exceedingly labored, and very unequal. He admired his declamatory powers, but thought that his art was too visible. He regarded Cooke as next to Kemble in tragedy, though his range was limited. His best *rôle* was that of a designing hypocrite, and he was admirable as Iago. But Irving could not find words to express his admiration of Mrs. Siddons, although she was then an old woman. He says, "Her looks, her voice, her gestures, delighted me. She penetrated in a moment to my heart. She froze and melted it by turns. A glance of her eye, a start, an exclamation, thrilled my whole frame." His admiration grew as he studied her wonderful acting; and when, years later, she met him, and complimented him by saying that his "Sketch-

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Book" had made her weep, he was so confused in his reverence and admiration for her, that he could not reply. Subsequently, however, they met again; and he succeeded in returning her compliment by relating how he had been affected.

After a short stay in England, and without visiting Scotland, as his brother had desired and he had intended, he sailed for home on the 18th of January. He had seen all of Europe that he cared to see, and was glad that his rambles were at an end. "It may seem strange to you," he writes to his brother, . . . "but I assure you it is true, that in a short time one gets tired of travelling, even in the gay and polished countries of Europe. Curiosity cannot be kept ever on the stretch: like sensual appetites, it in time becomes sated, and no longer enjoys the food it formerly searched after with avidity. On entering a strange place at present, I feel no more that interest which prompted me on first arriving in Europe to be perpetually on the hunt for curiosities and beauties."

The passage homeward was as stormy as the passage over had been mild. Off Long Island the vessel was caught in a snow-storm, and there was danger of having to go on shore before reaching the harbor. At length, however, Irving landed in New York, after a voyage of sixty-four days, and an absence from home of nearly two years.

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CHAPTER III.

LITERARY LIFE IN NEW YORK.

1806–1815.

NEW YORK in 1806 was but a large town as compared with the great city of to-day, and its life and society were wholly different from those of the present. Everybody knew everybody else. Conviviality, even beyond the limits of temperance, was fashionable. Dinners were frequent, and good-fellowship prevailed. Literary men were among the lions of society, and gathered round them a host of admirers.

Irving, fresh from a Continental tour, — more rare in those days than now, — and having the prestige of his "Oldstyle Papers," was at once quite important in the city. His journey had restored his health, and his return to his friends had quickened his spirits. He was in every respect ready for the convivial life of his native city, and for the most whimsical pranks of his young associates.

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Among his most intimate friends were Henry Ogden (who soon afterwards went to China), Henry Brevoort, Peter and Gouverneur Kemble, and James K. Paulding. These, with others, called themselves "the nine worthies," or "the lads of Kilkenny."

In the city, one of their favorite places of resort was "Dyde's," a well-kept public house in Park Row, near the theatre, where they had frequent meetings and convivial banquets.

But the principal rendezvous for sport was an old family mansion near Newark, on the banks of the Passaic. The place was owned by Gouverneur Kemble, and called by the young men "Cockloft Hall." It was an ancient building, filled with antique furniture, and kept by an old man and his wife and a negro boy. Here "the nine worthies," secluded from the eyes of the public, engaged in pranks that may have been innocent, but were certainly undignified. Looking back at these performances through the spectacles of venerable age, Irving expressed wonder at the contrast between the two periods.

In November, 1806, Irving was admitted to the bar. His legal knowledge was probably very limited, as his attainments were not great when he began his travels, and surely were not increased during his absence. In truth, law did not open to his eyes an inviting pathway to fame, or even to a competence. He entered the office of his brother

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John as a partner, but was anxious for a political appointment, and requested a "good word" from his former preceptor, Mr. Hoffman. The office, however, did not fall to his lot; and for a while he continued nominally to devote himself to law.

His literary tastes, and passion for writing, soon led him to project, in connection with his brother William and James K. Paulding, a publication modelled after "The Spectator." The pamphlet was to appear at odd intervals, according to the amount of matter and the pleasure of the writers. They called the series of papers "Salmagundi; or, the Whimwhams and Opinions of Launcelot Langstaff, Esq., and Others."

The writers of this singular publication declared that it was their intention "to instruct the young, reform the old, correct the town, and castigate the age." They announced that their judgments were infallible; that they asked no favors; had a sublime contempt for money; and that, if people did not read their pages, they might "settle the affair with their consciences and posterity." The articles were signed by various pseudonymes: as, William Wizard, Esq.; Anthony Evergreen, Gent.; Jeremy Cockloft the Younger; and others. It was not understood by the young men that they were to reap any reward for their labors, though they did finally receive a hundred dollars each. The publisher, however, realized some ten thousand

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dollars from the enterprise. The poetry was signed "Pindar Cockloft," and was written by William Irving, then a prosperous merchant of the city, and for a long time previous a contributor to the press.

The prose articles were by Washington Irving and Paulding, assisted by William only in the composition of the letters of Mustapha. Paulding was a brother of William's wife, and a resident in his household. In 1815 he became Secretary to the Board of Naval Commissioners, was Navy Agent at New York for many years, and Secretary of the Navy under Van Buren. He was a poet, a novelist, and a biographer. Ten years after the close of the "Salmagundi" papers, Paulding attempted a second series, which was not very successful. He is best known as the author of "The Dutchman's Fireside,"—his ablest novel,—and his "Life of Washington." He survived Irving, dying in 1860.

A word concerning the eccentric publisher of "Salmagundi" may be fitting here. David Longworth, says Duyckinck, was "a gentleman as much given to whimwhams as any of the race so pleasantly satirized in the little yellow-covered numbers which he sent forth fortnightly to the public. He was the theatrical publisher of the day, in the neighborhood of the old Park Theatre, then a new building, holding his place of business

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on the spot now sacred to the good cheer of Windust. Here he displayed, on the outer wall, a huge painting of the crowning of Shakespeare; while, within (a distinction for those times in the infant state of arts), his shop boasted as its attraction a series of the prints of Alderman Boydell's recently published Shakespeare Gallery. He had been a printer, and had ingrafted on his occupation a taste for elegance in typography, engraving, and binding. His beautiful 'Telemachus' and other publications would in our day be simply accounted neat; but in his time they made a sensation. . . . In the original edition of some of his books, proper names are spelled with small initial letters. Oddly enough, the man who was so grandiloquent himself would not allow New York its appropriate capitals. It must be written new-york, and portly philadelphia must dwindle in lower-case letters."[1] The writers of "Salmagundi" familiarly called their worthy publisher "Dusky Davy."

The reception of "Salmagundi" was marvellous. The fashionable coteries made it the staple of conversation. It was discussed at every tea-table. The sale proved that really popular literature was a profitable commodity. Literary drudges were blue with envy that their annotated catechisms and doggerel verses should be outdone by a pamphlet

[1] Preface to Salmagundi.

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whose spirit was that of carelessness and defiance. The town was agog to unearth the authorship of the nonchalant critic and censor of public manners and morals. It was the first really fresh and entirely original production of its kind in our literature. "Franklin," says Duyckinck, "had written a half-dozen agreeable essays for a newspaper, and addressed a few complimentary apologues to the French ladies. Francis Hopkinson was really an elegant author, who, like Belknap in 'The Foresters,' had turned the graces of his pen to the decoration of politics; Dennie wrote some ingenious lay sermons, and was steeped in rhetorical refinements. But none of these were read by the fair. We do not, indeed, recall a single book written in America, worthy of Belinda's toilet-table, before 'Salmagundi.'"[1]

Irving himself characterized the work as "full of errors, puerilities, and imperfections." While this judgment is correct, the work was in many respects of more than ordinary merit. William Cullen Bryant, in his memorial address, says of it, "Its gayety is its own: its style of humor is not that of Addison nor Goldsmith, though it has all the genial spirit of theirs; nor is it borrowed from any other writer. It is far more frolicsome and joyous, yet tempered by a native gracefulness."[2] Henry T. Tuckerman declares that it was

[1] Preface to Salmagundi.

[2] Orations and Addresses, pp. 109, 110.

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"exquisitely adapted to the latitude of New York," and a "complete triumph of local genius."[1] John Neal said in "Blackwood's Magazine," that, "as a whole, the work is quite superior to any thing of the kind which this age has produced."[2]

"Salmagundi" was abruptly discontinued with the twentieth number, on the 25th of January, 1808, having been issued at various intervals since Jan. 24, 1807.

Among Irving's correspondents during this period was a Miss Mary Fairlie, to whom he seems to have been much attached as a friend, and to whom he wrote very sprightly letters. In one of these we have a graphic sketch of his experience in ward-politics, to which he was probably driven in the hope of the appointment that the "good word" of Mr. Hoffman had failed to secure. Irving's sensibilities were too fine for such demagogism; and he thus relates his efforts to secure a Federalist election in the Seventh Ward: "I drank beer with the multitude, and I talked handbill fashion with the demagogues, and I shook hands with the mob, whom my heart abhorreth. . . . But the third day — ah! then came the tug of war. My patriotism all at once blazed forth, and I determined to save my country! O my friend! I have been in such holes and corners, such filthy nooks

[1] Sketch of American Literature.
[2] January, 1825, p. 61.

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and filthy corners, sweep-offices and oyster-cellars! . . . Truly this saving one's country is a nauseous piece of business; and, if patriotism is such a dirty virtue, prithee no more of it."[1] His fair correspondent rejoices in his defeat,—a possible element in his dissatisfaction with politics.

In June of this year (1807) Irving was sent to Richmond, having been retained as counsel against Aaron Burr, then on trial for treason. His client seems to have engaged him less on account of his legal ability than for the sake of pen-pictures of the trial. His sympathies, however, were all with Burr. He could not believe that he was guilty of treason. He was profoundly impressed with the fine presence and behavior of the accused, visited him in his prison, and received his thanks for his interest. He speaks reproachfully of the conduct of the government in confining the distinguished culprit in the common prison, and is touched with his loneliness and sickness in his damp chamber. He admires the sentiment of the ladies of Richmond, who, he says, would gladly have seen Burr liberated. Indeed, he seems to have been much interested in the fair daughters of the city, and speaks in admiring terms of their sociable manners, polished conversation, and generous hospitality. He was enchanted also with the beauties of the city itself.

[1] Life and Letters, vol. i. p. 187.

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Soon after his return from the South he lost his father, who had been suffering from paralysis. He died at the age of seventy-six, honored by all who knew him as a man of rectitude and piety. Irving's mother was left in possession of a competence, and he made his home with her for some time after.

Soon after the discontinuance of "Salmagundi," Irving, in connection with his brother Dr. Peter Irving, who had just returned from a year's absence in Europe, formed a project for a history of New York. The idea originated in a desire to burlesque the "Picture of New York," by Dr. Samuel Mitchill, then recently published. They intended to parody its pedantry, and display of erudition, and in their vast accumulation of notes "laid all kinds of works under contribution for trite citations, relevant or irrelevant, to give it the proper air of learned research." It was to begin with the creation of the world, sketch the history of Manhattan Island, and include "notices of the customs, manners, and institutions of the city; written in a serio-comic vein, and treating local errors, follies, and abuses with good-humored satire." The departure of Peter for Europe interrupted the joint authorship; and the work was for a time postponed by the death of Irving's sister, and another who was still dearer to him.

His intimacy in the family of his former pre-

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ceptor, Mr. Hoffman, led to a tender regard for his second daughter. A union was contemplated as soon as circumstances would allow, and he was anxious to obtain such a "sober certainty" of income that he could honorably link the young lady's fortunes with his own. He seems even to have considered a supercargoship, in the hope of increasing his chances for a livelihood; but from this he was dissuaded by his brother Peter. While he was planning an improvement of his fortune, a blow fell, which, for the time, almost paralyzed his heart.

The object of his affections, Matilda Hoffman, ended her life in the city of New York on the 26th of April, 1809, in her eighteenth year. She was not regarded as a belle, but is described as "lovely in person and mind, of the most gentle and engaging manners, and with a sensibility that mingled gracefully with a delicate and playful humor." After this loss, Irving never referred to this part of his history, or even breathed her name to his most intimate friends. On one occasion, thirty years afterward, her father accidentally spoke her name. Irving, who had just been engaged in lively conversation, at once became silent, a shade of inexpressible sadness fell upon his countenance, and he soon after left the room without a word. After his death a fragment among his private memoranda showed that he had once unbosomed his feel-

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ings, but only under a sacred promise of silence. With this fragment was found a miniature likeness and a braid of fair hair, marked in his own handwriting, "Matilda Hoffman." Her Bible and Prayer-Book were companions of all his rambles over the world; and he cherished them to the last, as sacred memorials of his lost love.

Irving found refuge for his troubled mind at the pleasant home of Judge William P. Van Ness, at Kinderhook, where he spent two months. Here, while engaged as a tutor in the judge's family, he continued his work upon "The History of New York." He changed the whole plan of the book, compressing his voluminous notes into five chapters, and confining the scope of the history to the period of the Dutch dynasty. The final touches were given to the work at the summer residence of Mr. Hoffman, at Ravenswood, near Hell Gate. While here he had the use of Brevoort's boat, "The Tinker," in which he used to ply between the city and his secluded retreat.

Great curiosity was awakened in New York by a series of advertisements issued in the city as a preparation for the publication of the history. The first, published on the 25th of October, 1809, was an inquiry after "a small elderly gentleman, dressed in an old black coat and cocked hat, by the name of KNICKERBOCKER," who had suddenly disappeared from his lodgings. The second,

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dated Nov. 6, was a reply to the first, stating that the old gentleman had been "seen by the passengers of the Albany stage, early in the morning, about four or five weeks since, resting himself by the side of the road, a little above Kingsbridge." The third was a letter, written ten days later, signed by Seth Handaside, landlord of the Independent Columbian Hotel, Mulberry Street, stating that "*a very curious kind of a written book*" had been found in his room, in his handwriting; and that unless Mr. Diedrich Knickerbocker returned, and paid his bill, the innkeeper would dispose of his book to satisfy himself for that gentleman's board. So completely successful was the hoax, that one of the municipal authorities called on the author's brother, John T. Irving, to ask advice on the propriety of offering a reward for the discovery of the unfortunate Knickerbocker.

In the mean time, Irving had taken his manuscript to Philadelphia to be printed, in order that its true character might not leak out in New York. Many additions and alterations were made while the work was going through the press, according to his custom in publishing. The voyage of Stuyvesant up the Hudson was written under somewhat peculiar circumstances. Finding himself locked out of his lodgings, Irving went to the quarters of a bachelor friend, but could not sleep after retiring. The idea of that voyage occurred

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to him at this time: and, rising, he sketched the outlines of it in the dark; for he could not find a light.

The announcement of the book appeared Dec. 6, and read as follows: —

IS THIS DAY PUBLISHED,

BY INSKEEP AND BRADFORD, NO. 128, BROADWAY,

A HISTORY OF NEW YORK.

In 2 vols. duodecimo. Price 3 dollars.

Containing an account of its discovery and settlement, with its internal policy, manners, customs, wars, etc., etc., under the Dutch government; furnishing many curious and interesting particulars never before published, and which are gathered from various manuscripts and other authenticated sources; the whole being interspersed with philosophical speculations and moral precepts.

This work was found in the chamber of Mr. Diedrich Knickerbocker, the old gentleman whose sudden and mysterious disappearance has been noticed. It is published in order to discharge certain debts he has left behind.

The book was received as a sober, honest history of the city; and the trick dawned on the consciousness of the reading public only when they became acquainted with its contents. "The Monthly Anthology and Boston Review," the leading critical periodical of the day, in noticing the book, declared it "the wittiest our press has ever produced." The Dutch families of the city felt their dignity insulted, and, with true loyalty to their ancestors, refused to see the wit, but felt

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most keenly the innocent satire. Some time afterwards, when the author was in Albany, he met a storm of indignation, but finally won the friendship, even of the indignant lady who vowed, that, if she were a man, she would horsewhip him. Even in 1818, Gulian C. Verplanck, an admirer of Irving's genius, spoke of him, in an historical address, as "wasting the riches of fancy on an ungrateful theme, and exuberant humor in a coarse caricature." A Baltimore journal, however, could see the fun in what the stolid descendants of its objects could not regard as funny. "If it be true, as Sterne says," declares this paper, "that a man draws a nail out of his coffin every time he laughs, after reading Irving's book your coffin will certainly fall to pieces." Edward Everett calls it "a work to be compared with any thing of the kind in our language."[1] Henry T. Tuckerman says it is "the most elaborate piece of humor in our literature."[2] John Neal regards it as "a work honorable to English literature, manly, bold, and so *altogether original*, without being extravagant, as to stand alone among the labors of men."[3] Sir Walter Scott, in a letter to Irving's friend Brevoort, dated April 23, 1813, notes the resemblance of the style in Knickerbocker's History to that of

[1] North-American Review, July, 1822, p. 206.
[2] Sketch of American Literature.
[3] Blackwood's Magazine, January, 1825, p. 62.

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Swift; declares that Mrs. Scott, two ladies, and himself, in reading the book together, were "absolutely sore with laughing;" and requests to know when Irving would write again. This reading of Knickerbocker was the means of procuring for Irving a warm welcome at Abbotsford, and the friendship of the "Wizard of the North."

In the following February Irving made a journey to Albany, in the hope of procuring a position as clerk in one of the courts. He failed in this attempt, and once more expressed his profound disgust with politics; this time becoming less abstract, and speaking his mind regarding the "scrub politicians who crawl about the great metropolis of our State like so many vermin about the head of the body politic."

While Irving's failure to secure the coveted position did not prevent him from writing the merriest letters to his friends, it clouded his mind with gloom in his hours of seclusion. He seems not to have gained any encouragement from the law, nor did literature as a profession present many attractions to him. Although the History had brought some three thousand dollars as the proceeds of the first edition, writing for a livelihood seemed to him too confining, too laborious, and too precarious. His "dread of the alms-house" was banished, however, by a proposal from his generous brother Peter. A partnership in trade

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was formed, consisting of the three brothers, Peter, Ebenezer, and Washington. Peter made the purchases and shipments at Liverpool, Ebenezer attended to the sales at New York, while Washington did nothing. The profits were generously divided into fifths, of which Peter and Ebenezer took two each, and Washington the remaining. It was agreed, moreover, that if Washington should marry, or become an active partner, he should receive a third. "It has never been my idea," says his noble brother Peter, "that you should become engaged in commerce except so slightly as not to interfere with your other habits and pursuits. Nor would I have it."

What kind of a business-man Irving was may be seen from his journey to Washington, whither he went for the firm early in the year 1811 during a period of great commercial anxiety. He spent nearly three weeks on the way, unable "to withstand the extremely friendly and hospitable attentions of the good people of Philadelphia and Baltimore." In the last-named city he met M. Tezier, a French gentleman who had just sent to Paris a French translation of "The History of New York." In Washington, Irving seems to have been much more occupied with "banqueting, revelling, and dancing," than with his commercial mission. He dined with both Federalists and Democrats, and enjoyed their society equally well. He was enter-

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tained by the Secretary of the Navy, the Mayor, and the President. He listened to the eloquence of Giles, Clay, and Randolph. Mrs. Madison, wife of the President, was his "sworn friend." He thought Clay "one of the finest fellows" that he had met. Randolph he called familiarly "Jack Randolph," and obtained a copy of his portrait. Summing up his experience in the capital, he says, "I have for a few months past led such a pleasant life, that I almost shrink from awaking from it into the commonplace round of regular existence."

Early in 1811 he took up his lodgings with his friend Brevoort. They had a common parlor, with sleeping-apartments adjoining. Brevoort's library was large and choice, and Irving feasted upon it with perfect freedom. During Brevoort's long absence in Europe, he remained in the same quarters; though they became exceedingly desolate without the gay companionship of his friend.

During this and the following year, Irving was enjoying his leisure; and, though his conscience often reproached him for it, his pen was almost wholly idle. He arranged for a new edition of "The History of New York," for which he was to receive twelve hundred dollars on a sale of fifteen hundred copies. He also assumed the editorship of a magazine called "The Select Reviews," whose name he changed to "The Analectic Magazine." This periodical was published in Philadelphia, and

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seems to have been popular for the time. His salary was fifteen hundred dollars; which was fair pay for "an amusing occupation, without any mental responsibility of consequence," as he says in a letter to Peter. His contributions to the magazine were chiefly biographical articles on the leading military and naval characters of the time, and reviews of prominent books. In reality, the conduct of the periodical was more irksome than he represented. His habits of writing were any thing but systematic, and for criticism he seems to have had a kind of abhorrence. He was too just to flatter, and too generous to be severe.

In 1813 he had the honor of meeting in New York one of the most distinguished men of that time, — the editor of "The Edinburgh Review," Francis Jeffrey. Mr. Jeffrey had been warmly praised by Peter Irving, who had met him abroad, and given him letters of introduction to prominent Americans. Irving was agreeably impressed with the great critic, and afterwards spoke of him as "one of the celebrities that did not disappoint you, whose conversation was as eloquent as his reviews." About this time he was requested to interest himself in securing an American copyright for Thomas Campbell the poet, whose life he had written for "The Analectic."

On the return of Brevoort to New York, he and Irving soon changed their quarters, taking rooms

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at the celebrated house of Mrs. Bradish, where they made the acquaintance of Captain Porter and Commodore Decatur and his wife.

In its earlier stages, Irving seems not to have had a great interest in the war then going on between the United States and Great Britain. The capture of Washington by the British, and their triumphant entry into the city, however, roused his slumbering patriotism.

"He was descending the Hudson in the steamboat when the tidings first reached him. It was night, and the passengers had betaken themselves to their settees to rest, when a person came on board at Poughkeepsie with the news of the inglorious triumph, and proceeded in the darkness of the cabin to relate the particulars, — the destruction of the President's house, the Treasury, War, and Navy Offices, the Capitol, the depository of the national library, and public records. There was a momentary pause after the speaker had ceased; when some paltry spirit lifted his head from his settee, and in a tone of complacent derision 'wondered what *Jimmy* Madison would say now.' — 'Sir,' said Mr. Irving, glad of an escape to his swelling indignation, 'do you seize on such a disaster only for a sneer? Let me tell you, sir, it is not now a question about *Jimmy* Madison, or *Jimmy* Armstrong [the Secretary of War]. The pride and honor of the nation are wounded; the country is insulted and disgraced by this barbarous success; and every loyal citizen would feel the ignominy, and be earnest to avenge it.' 'I could not see the fellow,' said Mr. Irving when he related the anecdote to me (his nephew); 'but I let fly at him in the dark.' A murmur of approbation followed the outburst, and then every ear was listening for the reply: but the

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energy of the rebuke had cowed the spokesman; for he did not again raise his voice." [1]

The spirit shown by Irving was the spirit of the whole nation, and the indignant country flew to arms. The sleeping energies of the insulted Republic awoke with a bound; and in little more than two weeks the British commander was slain, the invaders were repulsed at Baltimore, the veterans were defeated at Plattsburg, and the power of the English navy was broken on Lake Champlain. Irving was not backward at this critical moment in lifting an arm for his country. When he reached New York he offered his services to Governor Tompkins, who made him his aide and military secretary, with the title of colonel.

Colonel Irving never drew a sword during his four-months' service; but he occupied important positions of trust, and filled them with honor. Having been intrusted with calling out the militia, he made a toilsome journey through the wilderness from Albany to Sackett's Harbor, on Lake Ontario, in the discharge of his duty.

Before the conclusion of the war, Irving started to Washington with the design of procuring an appointment in the regular army. Being detained in Philadelphia to settle with the publisher of "The Analectic Magazine," who had failed, he abandoned for the time his intention of visiting

[1] Life and Letters, vol. i. pp. 311, 312.

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the capital. While attending to his business, the news of the victory at New Orleans came, and tidings of peace soon followed.

A projected cruise in the Mediterranean with Decatur, on his expedition against the Dey of Algiers, was given up; and so Irving narrowly missed witnessing the terrible chastisement inflicted upon that scourge of our commerce. Only five days after Decatur's fleet had departed, Irving embarked for Liverpool, eager to watch the development of the stirring events that were foreshadowed by Napoleon's return from his captivity in Elba.

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CHAPTER IV.

IN EUROPE AGAIN.

1815-1825.

IRVING'S expectations of a new career of glory for Bonaparte were doomed to sudden disappointment. Among the first items of news that reached him on landing in Liverpool were the defeat at Waterloo and Bonaparte's flight. A few weeks after came the intelligence that Napoleon had been captured, and would be sent to St. Helena. Irving's sympathies were with the emperor; and he regretted that Napoleon had not fallen on the field, instead of being at the disposal of that "bloated sensualist," the Prince Regent of England.

Soon after his arrival, Irving made a visit to Sydenham, the home of Thomas Campbell, who was then engaged in publishing his work on the English poets. At the time of this visit, Campbell was absent. Irving was delighted with Mrs. Campbell, "a most engaging and interesting wo-

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man." She spoke very modestly of her husband, remarking that it was unfortunate for Campbell that he was contemporary with Scott and Byron, who wrote with great rapidity, while Campbell wrote slowly, and was continually discouraged by their brilliant successes. Some time afterwards Irving mentioned this to Scott, who generously laughed, and said, "Poetry goes by quality, not by bulk. My poems . . . are mere Scotch pebbles, after all: now, Tom Campbell's are real diamonds, and diamonds of the first water." It was at Campbell's that Irving learned of the failure of the Ballantynes, and Scott's losses. He remarks, in a letter in which he describes this visit, that "it is very much doubted whether Scott is the author of 'Waverley,' and 'Guy Mannering.' Brown, one of the publishers, positively says he is not."

Irving made his headquarters at Birmingham with his brother-in-law, Henry Van Wart, who resided in that city. After visiting London, Bath, and Bristol, he returned to Liverpool, where Peter was then stationed. The illness of Peter made it necessary that Irving should devote himself to business with close attention. The affairs of the firm at this time were embarrassed; and the humorist of "The History of New York" was forced to become, as he said of himself, "as dull, commonplace a fellow as ever figured on 'Change."

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But, even amid the perplexities and anxieties of business, his old fondness for the theatre displays itself in vivid pen-portraits of the prominent actors of the day. Miss O'Neil he conceived to be a "divine perfection of a woman;" and so intense was his admiration of her, that he refused an introduction, lest he be disenchanted. Kean he thought was greatly over-estimated, though some undervalued him. He regarded him as "a strange compound of merits and defects," whose "excellence consists in sudden and brilliant touches, in vivid exhibitions of passion and emotion."

The close of the year 1815 was a dark period for the firm of P. Irving & Co. The new year opened no better; and in January Irving writes, "I would not again experience the anxious days and sleepless nights which have been my lot since I have taken hold of business, to possess the wealth of Crœsus." The following May brought no respite from anxiety; and he wrote to Brevoort, "I am here alone, attending to business; and the times are so hard, that they sicken my very soul. Good God! what would I give to be once more with you, and all this mortal coil shuffled off my heart!" The return of Peter with restored health brought hope again, and he longed for a renewal of his lost literary life. A new edition of "The History of New York" was projected, for which Washington Allston was to prepare designs.

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Freedom from business restored his old vivacity of spirits, and he was seized with a desire to return home. The death of his mother, April 9, 1817, at once saddened his mind, and destroyed his desire to return by putting "an end to one strong inducement that was continually tugging at his heart." Relief was sought in a pedestrian excursion into Wales in company with Peter, and William C. Preston, then a young man, afterwards a senator of the United States.

His straitened circumstances led Irving to form a plan for the republication of English books in America, whereby he hoped to realize some pecuniary advantage. His business brought him in contact with London publishers and authors. At a dinner at John Murray's he met the elder Disraeli, whom he describes as a "very pleasant, cheerful old fellow; curious about America, and evidently tickled at the circulation his works have had there; though, like most authors just now, he groans at not being able to participate in the profits." He found Mr. Murray "very merry and loquacious;" but the plan for republishing in America seems not to have found much favor.

A day with Campbell at Sydenham was greatly enjoyed by Irving. The poet was still "simmering over his biographical and critical labors," in which he had been engaged without publishing for seven years, owing to the slowness of his pub-

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lisher and his own habit of altering and amending every page. Campbell's inclination to visit America was encouraged by Irving; but the expense was an impassable barrier. Irving proposed to Brevoort that arrangements be made in the principal American cities for the delivery of Campbell's lectures on poetry and belles-lettres, which had been received with great applause in London. Something of this kind was attempted; but the poet declined to undertake the journey, pleading his old age.

In August, 1817, Irving made a visit to Edinburgh, which he thought the most picturesque place that he had ever seen, with the exception of Naples. Although his visit was made at a season of the year when the city was almost deserted by men of letters, he met Sir Humphry Davy's lady, — whom he compared to a "minister-bird with all the birds of the forest perched on the surrounding branches in listening attitudes," — the wife and daughter of Dugald Stewart, and other notables. He was the guest of Mr. Jeffrey, who offered him a letter of introduction to Scott. A "very particular" letter from Campbell, however, was deemed sufficient; and with this he set out for the romantic wilds of the Highlands. His visit to the great poet and novelist, whom he now knew to be the author of "Waverley," is thus described in his own language: —

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"On Saturday morning early I took chaise for Melrose, and on the way stopped at the gate of Abbotsford, and sent in my letter of introduction, with a request to know whether it would be agreeable for Mr. Scott to receive a visit from me in the course of the day. The glorious old minstrel himself came limping to the gate; took me by the hand in a way that made me feel as if we were old friends. In a moment I was seated at his hospitable board, among his charming little family. . . . I had intended certainly being back to Edinburgh to-day (Monday); but Mr. Scott wishes me to stay until Wednesday, that we may make excursions to Dryburgh Abbey, Yarrow, &c., as the weather has held up, and the sun begins to shine. I cannot tell you how truly I have enjoyed the hours I have passed here. They fly by too quick; yet each is loaded with story, incident, or song: and when I consider the world of ideas, images, and impressions, that have been crowded upon my mind since I have been here, it seems incredible that I should only have been two days at Abbotsford. I have rambled about the hills with Scott; visited the haunts of Thomas the Rhymer, and other spots rendered classic by border tale and witching song; and have been in a kind of dream or delirium.

"As to Scott, I cannot express my delight at his character and manners. He is a sterling, golden-hearted old worthy, full of the joyousness of youth, with an imagination continually furnishing forth pictures, and a charming simplicity of manner that puts you at ease with him in a moment. It has been a constant source of pleasure to me to remark his deportment towards his family, his neighbors, his domestics, his very dogs and cats: every thing that comes within his influence seems to catch a beam of that sunshine that plays round his heart. But I shall say more of him hereafter; for he is a theme on which I shall love to dwell.[1]

[1] Life and Letters, vol. i. pp. 381, 382.

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Scott's opinion of his guest may not improperly find a place here. In a letter to his friend John Richardson, dated Sept. 22, 1817, he says, "When you see Tom Campbell, tell him, with my best love, that I have to thank him for making me known to Mr. Washington Irving, who is one of the best and pleasantest acquaintances I have made this many a day."

On his return to Edinburgh, Irving met several of the leading publishers, and succeeded in making arrangements with Constable and Blackwood for the republication of books in America. Though treated by Constable with great kindness, Irving could see that he was anxious to have the manuscript of "Rob Roy" in the printer's hands, and was "a little uneasy lest Scott's time should be too much taken up by company."

About this time, Irving radically changed his views and plans of life. He had been hoping for an appointment as secretary of legation at the court of St. James; and his brother William, who was then in the United-States Congress, had exerted himself to procure it for him. Disappointed in this, Irving began the formation of plans for self-support by means of his pen. His habits and notions were so changed, that he could look upon literature as a profession with a favoring eye. He resolved to remain in Europe, give up the gayeties of the world, and contemplate without despond-

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ency "a life of loneliness, and of parsimonious and almost painful economy."

In January, 1818, it became evident that the firm of P. Irving & Co. must go into bankruptcy. It was a severe blow to Washington, whose pride was great, and whose labors to avert this calamity had been arduous. He sought refuge from this mortification in retirement and the study of the German language. In the following August he proceeded to London with the determination to earn his bread with his pen. He arrived just in time to bid farewell to Allston, who was on the point of returning to America. The loss of this noble companion, whose society he had hoped to enjoy, left him in a condition of despondency; and he says, "My heart sank within me as I returned, gloomy and dispirited, to my lodgings." He found pleasant associates, however, in Leslie and Newton, two young American painters of great promise. Allston and Leslie had prepared two drawings for "The History of New York," and the plates of these were soon after sent to America for the new edition of that work.

A new mode of life opened for Irving at this time. His friend Commodore Decatur had made arrangements for his appointment to the office of first clerk in the Navy Department, — a position requiring at that time but little labor, and worth twenty-four hundred dollars per annum. Contrary

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to the expectations and desires of his brothers, he declined the offer, stating as his principal reason, that he did not wish to assume any position that would involve him in such a routine of duties as to prevent his attending to literary pursuits. His decision seems never to have caused him any regret. In a letter written some time later he justifies his previous action, and incidentally records his own estimate of his powers: —

"The fact is, that situation would have given me barely a genteel subsistence. It would have led to no higher situations; for I am quite unfitted for political life. My talents are merely literary; and all my habits of thinking, reading, &c., have been in a different direction from that required for the active politician. It is a mistake to suppose I would fill an office there, and devote myself at the same time to literature. I require much leisure, and a mind entirely abstracted from other cares and occupations, if I would write much or well. I should, therefore, at Washington, be completely out of my element, and, instead of adding to my reputation, stand a chance of impairing that which I already possess. If I ever get any solid credit with the public, it must be in the quiet and assiduous operations of my pen, under the mere guidance of fancy or feeling."[1]

He began amid these reflections to "nurse" his mind for literary occupations, with the hope that he might gain a livelihood, and amass for the future some literary property in copyright. In company with the very letter above quoted, he

[1] Life and Letters, vol i. p. 412.

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sent to Ebenezer a parcel of manuscript which he characterized as "babblings only fit for a brother's eye." This manuscript was soon committed to Brevoort for publication in America. "My writings," he says to his friend, "may appear light and trifling in our country of philosophers and politicians; but, if they possess merit in the class of literature to which they belong, it is all to which I aspire in the work. I seek only to blow a flute accompaniment in the national concert, and leave others to play the fiddle and French horn."

This manuscript was printed by Van Winkle of New York, and published on the 15th of May, 1819, in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, as "The Sketch-Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.," and contained the Prospectus, the Author's Account of Himself, "The Voyage," "Roscoe," "The Wife," and "Rip Van Winkle;" forming a volume of ninety-three octavo pages. The first edition of this first number of "The Sketch-Book" consisted of two thousand copies, and, for those times, was an elegant specimen of book-making, selling for seventy-five cents. A continuance of the work was promised, if it should be favorably received; for the author confessed that it was "the dearest wish of his heart to have a secure and cherished though humble corner in the good opinions and kind feelings of his countrymen."

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The appearance of the first number created a sensation in literary circles, and thousands were glad to welcome back the long-missed Knickerbocker. "The Sketch-Book" linked itself to "The History of New York" by the story of "Rip Van Winkle," which was declared to be a posthumous production of poor old Diedrich Knickerbocker. Thus the authorship of the volume at once became known, as it soon would have been by a thousand traces of Irving's workmanship. "We had begun to reproach him with something like parsimony," says a contemporary newspaper; "to tell him that he was in debt to us; that the wealth and magnitude of his endowments were the patrimony of his country, — a part of our inheritance." Mr. Verplanck wrote in "The Analectic Magazine" for July, that it was "needless to inform any who have read the book, that it is from the pen of Mr. Irving. His rich and sometimes extravagant humor, his gay and graceful fancy, his peculiar choice and felicity of original expression, as well as the pure and fine moral feeling which imperceptibly pervades every thought and image, without being anywhere ostentatious or dogmatic, betray the author in every page, even without the aid of those minor peculiarities of style, taste, and local allusions, which at once identify Geoffrey Crayon with the venerable Knickerbocker."

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Early in April, Irving had sent a second number of "The Sketch-Book," including "English Writers on America," "Rural Life in England," "The Broken Heart," and "The Art of Book-Making." The second number was regarded as superior to the first. Mr. Richard H. Dana, in "The North-American Review," said of the scenery in the "Rural Life in England," "It is all gentleness and sunshine: the bright influences of nature fall on us, and our disturbed and lowering spirits are made clear and tranquil, — turned all to beauty, like clouds shone on by the moon." William Godwin, the author of "Caleb Williams," said of the second number, "Everywhere I find in it the marks of a mind of the utmost elegance and refinement; a thing, as you know, that I was not exactly prepared to look for in an American. . . . Each of the essays is entitled to its appropriate praise, and the whole is such as I scarcely know an Englishman that could have written."

While his books were selling with magical rapidity, and the most hostile critics were conciliated into praise, poor Irving was painfully depressed, and worried with anxieties about their fate. His nervous condition rendered him unfit for literary labor. His words to Brevoort are almost pathetic. "All that I do at present," he says, "is in transient gleams of sunshine which are soon overclouded, and I have to struggle against

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continual damps and chills." Such was the condition of the suffering author while for months the broad expanse of the Atlantic stretched between him and the echoes of his fame.

A third and a fourth number were despatched, and these were received with unabated delight. When, at length, toward the close of July, a copy of the first number reached him, he was greatly pleased with its elegance of form and unexpected success. His spirits were revived, and he renewed his exertions. A complaint about the price of the numbers called forth this reply: "If the American public wish to have a literature of their own, they must consent to pay for the support of authors. A work of the same size, and got up in the same way, as my first number, would sell for *more* in England, and the cost of printing would be less."

When the commendatory notices came with copies of the first and second number of "The Sketch-Book," — the first having reached a second edition, — he wrote, Sept. 9, to Brevoort, —

"The manner in which the work has been received, and the eulogiums that have been passed upon it in the American papers and periodical works, have completely overwhelmed me. They go far, *far* beyond my most sanguine expectations, and, indeed, are expressed with such peculiar warmth and kindness as to affect me in the tenderest manner. The receipt of your letter, and the reading of some of those criticisms this morning, have rendered me nervous for the whole day. . . . I hope you will not attribute all this

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sensibility to the kind reception I have met with to an author's vanity: I am sure it proceeds from very different sources. Vanity could not bring the tears into my eyes as they have been brought by the kindness of my countrymen. I have felt cast down, blighted, and broken-spirited; and these sudden rays of sunshine agitate even more than they revive me."[1]

The fact that several of his articles in "The Sketch-Book" had been printed in prominent English magazines, and the rumor that a surreptitious edition of the early numbers was about to be published in England, led Irving to contemplate republication in Great Britain. Accordingly, he took the printed numbers to Mr. John Murray, the "prince of publishers," and left them for his examination. Mr. Murray declined the work on the ground that he did "not see that scope in the nature of it" which would enable him to make those satisfactory accounts between himself and the author without which he felt no satisfaction in engaging. Irving's next step was to forward the numbers to Scott, with a request that he would confer with Constable of Edinburgh with regard to their publication, in case he thought them worthy. Before seeing the numbers, which reached him by another route, Scott kindly replied, stating that he would do all in his power for him with Constable. Scott's letter contained a remarkable propo-

[1] Life and Letters, vol. i. pp. 432, 433.

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sition. It was, that Irving should become editor of a projected anti-Jacobin periodical to be published weekly in Edinburgh. The salary promised was five hundred pounds certain, with a prospect of further advantages. A postscript, added after Scott had seen the books, expressed his warm admiration of them, and re-assured Irving of Scott's desire to help him. The offer of the editorship was promptly declined, on the ground, as Irving asserted, that he was "peculiarly unfitted for the task proposed."

A second letter from Scott explicitly pointed out the various modes of publication, and commended the reprinting of "The Sketch-Book," which he termed "a delightful work." Assurance was given in this letter that Constable would treat Irving's proposition with due attention; but, before the reception of the letter, arrangements had been made with an obscure bookseller, whereby "The Sketch-Book" was to be reprinted wholly at Irving's own expense. The first volume contained four numbers, and a thousand copies were printed. Owing to Irving's unwillingness to propitiate the critics by sending gratuitous copies to the press, and the failure of his publisher, John Miller, soon after his book was ready, the sale, which promised fairly, was suddenly checked, and the poor author was left with a large remainder on his hands. About this time the sixth American

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number appeared, containing "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." Scott read it, and was delighted with the delineation of "Brom Bones." In his misfortune, Irving once more applied to this "golden-hearted man;" and, coming up to London soon after to receive his baronetcy, Scott made representations to Murray which induced him to undertake the future publication of the work.

Speaking of the influence of "The Sketch-Book" upon American literature, William Cullen Bryant says, "At the time it appeared, the periodical lists of new American publications were extremely meagre, and consisted, to a great extent, of occasional pamphlets and dissertations on the questions of the day. The works of greater pretension were, for the most part, crudely and languidly made up, and destined to be little read. A work like 'The Sketch-Book,' welcomed on both sides of the Atlantic, showed the possibility of an American author acquiring a fame bounded only by the limits of his own language, and gave an example of the qualities by which it might be won. Within two years afterward we had Cooper's 'Spy,' and Dana's 'Idle Man.' The press of our country began, by degrees, to teem with works composed with a literary skill and a spirited activity of intellect until then little known among us. Every year the assertion that we had no literature of our own became less and less true; and now, when we

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look over a list of new works by native authors, we find, with an astonishment amounting almost to alarm, that the most voracious devourer of books must despair of being able to read half those which make a fair claim upon his attention."[1]

After the publication of "The Sketch-Book," Irving's life in London seems to have changed. Hitherto he had been solitary and depressed. Henceforth he was a constant attendant upon the levees in Murray's drawing-room, — the resort of all the great men of letters, — and he entered with spirit into their exhilarating society. Here he met again his "stanch old friend Isaac Disraeli;" here he was courteously received by Gifford, "a small, shrivelled, deformed man, of about sixty, with something of a humped back, eyes that diverge, and a large mouth, . . . without any of the petulance that you would be apt to expect" from the lynx-eyed critic; here he listened to the romantic conversation of Belzoni the traveller, a perfect Sinbad in the fascination of his adventures; here he became acquainted with Hallam, "affable and unpretending," and "a copious talker;" here he conversed familiarly with Foscolo, Milman, and Southey.

Among these celebrities Irving was looked upon with favor. Substantial reward came to him from

[1] Orations and Addresses, p. 122.

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Murray. In addition to the two hundred pounds originally paid for "The Sketch-Book," this generous patron of genius a few months later begged Irving to accept a hundred guineas. His first editions were rapidly taken, and new and cheaper ones followed. Murray soon engaged to reprint "The History of New York," calling it the "Don Quixote" of the writer's country, and expressing his delight with "the novelty of character and scenery" in the work. Leslie was invited to prepare eight or ten drawings for it; and an elegant edition was projected, in which these were to appear. Lord Byron was greatly pleased with "The Sketch-Book," and said of it to a friend, "I know it by heart; at least, there is not a passage that I cannot refer to immediately." But the circumstance that gave Irving the purest satisfaction was the indirect praise that was implied in a popular guess about the authorship of his work. Lady Lyttleton, a lady of culture, and daughter of Lord Spencer, wrote to Richard Rush, the American minister at the court of St. James, to ascertain if Irving was really the author of "The Sketch-Book." She had heard a report current in the literary world that the real author was Sir Walter Scott, "whose very numerous disguises, and whose well-known fondness for literary masquerading, seem to have gained him the advantage of being suspected as the author of every distinguished

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work that is published." The lady desired some conclusive proof that "the most amiable book we have read for a long time has not the defect of being a trick upon readers." The letter was forwarded to Irving, who, in his reply to Mr. Rush, suggested in Italics that the report probably arose "from the old notion that it is impossible for an *American to write decent English.*"

The correspondence resulted in procuring an invitation from Lord and Lady Spencer to spend the following Christmas with them. As Irving was in Paris when the invitation was received, having gone there in August with his brother Peter, he was unable to accept.

Irving's life in Paris was, as he describes it, "miscellaneous." His companions there were Lord John Russell, Canning, Talma, John Howard Payne, and Tom Moore. The two first mentioned are well known as English statesmen. Talma was a French tragedian of extraordinary power, especially in the character of Hamlet. Payne had been a townsman of Irving's in America, was unfortunate in his financial affairs, well acquainted with the horrors of a debtor's prison, and at this time a refugee in Paris. He is immortal in the hearts of the English-speaking race as the author of "Home, Sweet Home." Tom Moore was also a refugee in Paris because of liabilities against him in England occasioned by the defalcation of his agent. But

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his misfortunes were no damper to his hilarity; and Irving writes to Murray, that in Moore's society he had become a "gayer fellow" than he could have wished. At Moore's house they danced until the floor gave way, drew a circle of chalk around one break as a warning to the dancers, and set one of the party to watch another, but did not cease their festivities until four in the morning. Moore declares in his diary that "Irving's humor began to break out as the floor broke in." Moore's gayety was keenly enjoyed by Irving; and he calls him "a charming, joyous fellow, full of frank, generous, manly feeling."

At the close of the year which he spent in Paris, Murray requested Irving to draw on him for a hundred pounds; to which Irving promptly responded, with the assurance that the favor came opportunely. In his reply he speaks of having "scribbled at intervals," and refers to a mass of writing of a rather desultory character, but, he hopes, containing some materials of value. Among these papers were some sketches designed for "Bracebridge Hall," the hint of which had been given him by Moore. One of these, "Buckthorne and his Friends," finally published in "The Tales of a Traveller," he read to Moore just before his return to England. The foundation of this playful sketch was a description of a literary dinner at Longmans', in which Moore had told him of the

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carving partner, the partner to laugh at the popular author's jokes, and the claret for twelfth-edition writers. It somewhat adds to the interest of this episode, that, soon after, Irving and Moore dined together at Longmans'. There was probably some fun at that dinner which the worthy hosts knew nothing about.

Another sketch among these writings, "St. Mark's Eve," afterward published in "Bracebridge Hall," was read to George Bancroft, then a youth fresh from his studies at Göttingen, and since the distinguished historian. Here in Paris one evening Irving read to Mr. Bancroft a portion of the piece which he had written at one sitting, from the paragraph beginning "I am now alone in my chamber" to the end of the story.

A desire to put some of his manuscript to press, and to witness the coronation of George IV., brought Irving back to London, where he arrived the day before the coronation. Like a true American, he independently took his stand with the crowd outside Westminster Abbey, in which the ceremony took place. Scott met him the next day, and inquired if he had witnessed the coronation. When Irving told him that he had seen the procession on the outside, Scott chided his modesty, and said, "You should have told them who you were, and you would have got in anywhere."

A consciousness of his popularity quickened his

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desire to bring out some of the sketches that he had brought from Paris. He had formed a collection of these, which he proposed to issue under the title of "Bracebridge Hall; or, the Humorists." Among these sketches was "Buckthorne," of which mention has been made already. Leslie, to whom he read it, thought that he should reserve this for separate publication after some expansion; and accordingly he substituted for it "The Student of Salamanca,"—a change that he afterwards regretted.

A journey with Leslie, in which the pair visited Oxford, Warwick, and Kenilworth, was the occasion of what has justly been called the "gem" of "Bracebridge Hall,"—"The Stout Gentleman." As Leslie relates in his Autobiography, a wet Sunday at Oxford suggested the story; and Irving wrote it seated on stiles or stones while Leslie sketched, or during the pauses of the coach as they travelled, laughing to himself while he pencilled his whimsical narrative.

At Birmingham, sickness confined him for nearly four months; and his worry about his book deferred his convalescence.

In the mean time Moore had returned to England, having met his liabilities with a thousand pounds obtained from Murray for the "Memoirs of Byron;" which, however, he had promised not to publish until the death of the latter, and which

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Murray held after advancing the money. In May, Irving was in London, and once more in the enjoyment of Moore's society. The eccentric John Randolph, whom Irving had met years before in Washington, was at this time a lion in London society, which was pleased with his strange manners and old style of conversation. Mrs. Siddons, then seventy years of age, yet retaining her "dignity of carriage and the noble expression of her countenance," again charmed him. He visited at Holland House, called on Lady Blessington with Moore, and dined with Lord and Lady Spencer at their country-seat at Wimbledon. Here he met the poet Rogers, who with paternal kindness looked over his list of invitations out, and cautioned him against such as he thought would prove "a direful bore." He spent a beautiful day in June at the country-seat of Thomas Hope, the author of "Anastasius," and famous for his wealth and magnificence. At a breakfast with Rogers, he met the poet Crabbe and other literary men.

In January, 1822, he had sent to his brother Ebenezer the manuscript of the first volume of "Bracebridge Hall," with directions to bring it out in New York simultaneously with the London edition. A second volume was forwarded in February. The work appeared on both sides of the Atlantic almost on the same day; the American

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edition appearing on May 21, the English two days later. The English copyright was sold to Murray for one thousand guineas, which was paid in bank-notes two weeks before the delivery of the manuscript.

"Bracebridge Hall," made up of short stories and sketches, was such a book as the fashionable world can afford to read. The critics, too, received it kindly. Lord Jeffrey said in "The Edinburgh Review," "The great charm and peculiarity of his work consists now, as on former occasions, in the singular sweetness of the composition, and the mildness of the sentiments,—sicklied over perhaps a little, now and then, with that cloying heaviness into which unvaried sweetness is so apt to subside. . . . It is very ill-natured in us, however, to object to what has given us so much pleasure; for we happen to be very intense and sensitive admirers of those soft harmonies of studied speech in which this author is apt to indulge himself, and have caught ourselves, oftener than we shall confess, neglecting his excellent matter, to lap ourselves in the liquid music of his periods, and letting ourselves float passively down the mellow falls and windings of his soft-flowing sentences with a delight not inferior to that which we derive from fine versification."[1] A writer in "Blackwood's Magazine" thinks that "Bracebridge Hall"

[1] November. 1822, pp. 338, 339.

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certainly does not possess the spirit of "The Sketch-Book."[1] John Neal, in the same periodical, expresses the opinion that the work, as a whole, is "quite unworthy of Irving's reputation."[2] These are the hardest words that have been said by competent critics against "Bracebridge Hall," except John Neal's statement that "The Student of Salamanca" is "beneath contempt." But we may turn from these censures to the verdict of Edward Everett, who says, "We have no hesitation in pronouncing 'Bracebridge Hall' quite equal to any thing which the present age of English literature has produced in this department. . . . Besides the episodical tales, he has given us admirable sketches of life and manners, highly curious in themselves, and rendered almost important by the good-natured mock-gravity, the ironical reverence, and lively wit, with which they are described."[3]

In hope of restoring his health, which had been impaired by his restless life in London, Irving started in July for a tour on the Continent. At Aix-la-Chapelle he visited the tomb of Charlemagne, and was interested in the obsolete customs preserved in this "little ghost-ridden city," as he termed it. At Mentz he had an experience which afterwards suggested the introduction to "The

[1] June, 1822, p. 688. [2] January, 1825, p. 66.
[3] North-American Review, July, 1822, p. 209.

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Tales of a Traveller," as related in the address to the reader in that book. His journey from Darmstadt to Heidelberg was a source of great benefit to him; and he said of it, "I feel a kind of intoxication of the heart as I draw in the pure air of the mountains; and the clear, transparent atmosphere, the steady, serene, golden sunshine, seems to enter into my very soul." From Ulm he proceeded to the battle-field of Blenheim, and thence to Munich, where he witnessed the celebration of the birthday of the King of Bavaria. At Vienna he saw the young Napoleon, or Duke of Reichstadt, — a mere boy, but exceedingly popular. Here also he saw the original manuscript of Tasso's "Jerusalem," with its countless interlineations and erasures, and bearing a resemblance in its handwriting to that of Byron. He arrived at Dresden near the close of November, where he remained during the winter, — probably one of the most delightful seasons of his life. In this antique city he found an English family — a mother with two daughters and two little boys — named Foster, whose residence, part of an old palace, was a resort for a select circle of ladies and gentlemen. Here he continued German, and reviewed his Italian. In a room fitted up as an amateur theatre, Irving and the Fosters acted private theatricals; and he humorously wrote to Leslie, "If the worst comes to the worst, I can turn stroller, and pick up a decent

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maintenance among the barns in England;" adding, that he verily believed Nature intended him to be a vagabond. But these quiet enjoyments were only a part of his pleasures in Dresden. He was intimate with the king and the queen, attended their *fêtes*, and danced with the princesses as if they had been boarding-school girls. He was passionately fond of the royal hunts, in which he joined, and which he vividly paints. He was a favorite with the royal household, and especially with the amiable queen, who read and praised his books.

Irving's eight months' sojourn in Dresden, pleasant as it was to him, was not conducive to literary productiveness. During all this time he had done nothing with his pen, though he consoled himself that he had "*lived into* a great deal of amusing and characteristic information, which, after all, is perhaps the best way of studying the world." In Paris, where he arrived early in August, 1823, he resolved to address himself to the preparation of another volume for the press. He seems at this time to have been sensitively alive to the difficulties of creative authorship. He dreaded to use his German materials, lest he might fall into the commonplace of the numerous legendary tales then before the public. On the other hand, he wished especially to avoid any apparent imitation of Scott. The problem of originality vexed him, and tried

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his ingenuity. He was unwilling that his pieces should depend for their success upon the narrative merely, but was ambitious for a classic quality in his work. It is encouraging to writers who are oppressed with a sense of barrenness, that Irving, whose fertility seems to us like that of a tropical soil, should occasionally feel himself sterile.

During this period of uncertainty how to use his pen he again met Payne, who was residing in Paris, and at work in retouching old plays. The two took lodgings together, and formed a secret partnership in the business of translating and remodelling. The plays worked upon by them were "Azendai," "Richelieu," "Belles and Bailiffs," "Married and Single," "Roulier," and "Charles II." Payne visited London "privately" — as he was compelled to do on account of his debts — to negotiate with managers for the sale of the plays. After much conference and delay, some of these were sold in London. "Richelieu" brought two hundred guineas, with the promise of copyright. Its presentation was long postponed, however; and the play finally failed from defect of plot, though it was thought to have many good points. It was afterwards republished in America; but seven hundred of the thousand copies printed remained on the publisher's shelves, and the managers objected that it lacked incident. "Charles II." sold for fifty guineas, and pleased, as Payne said, "amaz-

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ingly." Charles Lamb said that the hiatus in Copp's song — a low ballad that the old captain was ever beginning, but which was broken off before completion — kept him awake nights.

In addition to the correction of plays, Irving had many plans for literary work. Among them was a novel to be called "The History of an Author," an expansion of "Buckthorne," which had been reserved from "Bracebridge Hall." Another scheme was a series of descriptions of character and scenery in Germany in a legendary setting. Still another was a new "Sketch-Book." None of these plans found enough attention to reach completion. His work, as shown by his diary from Jan. 1 to the end of March, 1824, was of a very desultory character: now a few hours correcting "Salmagundi" for Galignani, a Parisian publisher; now the sketching of a Dutch story; now an Italian tale; now "The Bold Dragoon;" now "The Mysterious Picture;" now an introduction to "Wolfert Webber;" now a sketch of Goldsmith for a collection of British literature which he had arranged to edit. For this editorial work Galignani agreed to pay him two hundred and fifty francs a volume, and gave him twenty-five hundred francs in advance. A letter from Murray concentrated his thoughts upon a new work, as that gentleman had offered him twelve hundred pounds for two more volumes of "The

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Sketch-Book," without seeing the manuscript. Irving in his reply confessed his need of money, and offered "The Tales of a Traveller," by Geoffrey Crayon, Gent., for fifteen hundred pounds.

After a visit to England, where he met many of his old friends, Irving returned to Paris to await the appearance of his new work. It was published in two octavo volumes on the 25th of August, 1824. It was at once in demand, but was violently attacked by the critics both in England and America. A writer in "Blackwood's Magazine" says, "I have been miserably disappointed in 'The Tales of a Traveller.'"[1] John Neal in the same periodical says, "You, Geoffrey Crayon, have great power, original power. We rejoice in your failure now, because we believe that it will drive you into a style of original composition far more worthy of yourself. Go to work: lose no time. Your foundations will be the stronger for this uproar. You cannot write a novel, a poem, a true tale, or a tragedy. You *can* write another 'Sketch-Book,' worth all that you have ever written, if you will draw out from yourself."[2] "Buckthorne and his Friends" was generally excepted from the condemnation of the volume; and the failure of the book was attributed by the highest authorities to Irving's indolence, rather than to his want of genius.

[1] September, 1824, p. 294. [2] October, 1824, p. 66.

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Copies of these criticisms, and some scurrilous diatribes from his own country, were forwarded to Irving by some one who had the impudence to sign himself "A Friend." Every line was a scorpion's sting to Irving's sensitive spirit, notwithstanding his avowal that he did not read criticism. Like a true philosopher, however, he wrote to Brevoort, "If my writings are worth any thing, they will outlive temporary criticism; if not, they are not worth caring about." And, in a letter to his nephew, he dissuaded him from choosing literature as a profession; adding, that he had a thousand times regretted with bitterness that he was led away into gaining his livelihood with the products of his imagination. "Believe me," he says with solemnity and evident sadness, "the man who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow eats oftener a sweeter morsel, however coarse, than he who procures it by the labor of his brains."

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CHAPTER V.

A VISIT TO SPAIN.

1826-1829.

THE blow of hostile criticism fell heavily upon Irving; and, aside from some sketches of "American Essays" which were never published, his pen found little employment. Even the engagement to edit the British classics was soon abandoned. A much more congenial occupation was found in the study of the Spanish language, for which he conceived the warmest admiration. In a letter to his nephew, he grows eloquent in praising the power, magnificence, and melody of its diction, and the animation, pathos, beauty, and sublimity of its poetry. "The old literature of Spain," he says, "partakes of the character of its history and its peoplet. There is an Oriental splendor about it. The mixture of Arabic fervor, magnificence, and romance, with old Castilian pride and punctilio, the chivalrous heroism, the immaculate virtue, the sublimated notions of honor and

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courtesy, all contrast finely with the sensual amours, the self-indulgences, the unprincipled and crafty intrigues, which so often form the groundwork of Italian story."

His investigations into these splendid histories of the old chivalric age in Spain quickened his imagination, and created a desire to visit the lands of Moorish and Castilian story. Accordingly, although he had received an invitation from Constable to prepare a Life of Washington, and Murray hoped he would soon have from him a new work, Irving determined to proceed to Madrid. He had met Alexander H. Everett, the American minister plenipotentiary to Spain, and had been promised by him, that, if he should come to that country, he should be attached to his embassy. A letter to Mr. Everett brought a friendly reply, enclosing passports, attaching him to his legation, and proposing that he translate a great Spanish work then about to be published by Navarrete on "The Voyages of Columbus." For this work Mr. Everett supposed Irving could obtain a thousand or fifteen hundred pounds from an English publisher. Irving was delighted with the proposal, and, taking with him his brother Peter as an assistant, hastened to Madrid by diligence, arriving about the middle of February, 1826.

He was so fortunate as to procure apartments in the residence of Mr. O. Rich, the American

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consul at Madrid. This gentleman was one of the most enthusiastic bibliographers in Europe, and had formed an excellent collection of books and documents relating to early Spanish history and the discovery of America, containing some papers that could not be found elsewhere. Thus surrounded, Irving awaited the appearance of "The Voyages of Columbus." When, soon after his arrival, that work was published, he found it a thesaurus of rich materials, rather than a readable history for popular use. He soon resolved not to attempt its translation, but to use some of its substance, with additions from other sources, in the preparation of more popular and artistic histories. He began at once a line of laborious research and industrious writing, often working all day and until late at night.

A "Life of Columbus" was first projected, and extensive notes were taken for this work. But, in the midst of his labors, he "played the truant" to his first plan, and spent several months in making a rough sketch for "The Conquest of Granada." Near the close of December he wrote to Murray, informing him that "Columbus" was nearly ready for publication, and soon after made arrangements with his nephew, Pierre M. Irving, — who had visited him at Madrid, but was then in Paris, — to superintend its passage through the press. Irving had greatly under-estimated the dif-

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ficulties of his work; and, as new sources of knowledge were opened to him, he found its completion continually postponed. It was impossible to secure copiers in Madrid; twenty pages being the utmost that he could have transcribed in several weeks. At last a copying-press facilitated his work near its close; but it was not until the end of July, 1827, that it was finished.

Irving intrusted the arrangements with Murray to his friend Colonel Aspinwall, American consul at London. He demanded three thousand guineas for the copyright, or was willing to publish on shares. Murray chose to pay the three thousand guineas, though he declared that Colonel Aspinwall was a true Yankee at a bargain.[1] If the price was high, the purchaser was delighted, and exclaimed over the manuscript, "It is beautiful, beautiful! — the best thing he has written." Southey was the first to whom the manuscript was shown, and he echoed Murray's praises most heartily.

Irving's first year at Madrid was less gay than any previous part of his career. It was, as he

[1] The following table representing the payments is taken from the Life and Letters: —

£300	down.					
450	in note	at 6	months	from	Jan. 1,	1828.
400	"	9	"	"	"	"
400	"	12	"	"	"	"
400	"	15	"	"	"	"
400	"	18	"	"	"	"
400	"	21	"	"	"	"
400	"	24	"	"	"	"
£3,150						

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himself said at the end of 1826, "a year of the hardest application and toil of the pen" he had ever passed. And yet he says of it, "I feel more satisfied, however, with the manner in which I have passed it than I have been with that of many gayer years, and close this year of my life in better humor with myself than I have often done." Nor was he altogether a hermit amid these labors. In the second year, at least, he enjoyed some society. He was intimate at the house of Mr. D'Oubril, the Russian minister; dined with Mr. Bosanquet, the British *chargé d'affaires;* and received visits from David Wilkie the painter, and Lord Mahon the historian. Perhaps one of the most pleasant incidents of his life in Madrid was a visit from Henry W. Longfellow, not then the famous poet, but a promising youth of twenty-one, fitting himself for the chair of modern languages in Bowdoin College, to which he had been called. His impressions of Irving were given many years afterward in an address before the Massachusetts Historical Society.

"The Life and Voyages of Columbus" was published in England, Feb. 11, 1828, in four large volumes. Murray put the price so high, and the typographical errors were so numerous through lack of Irving's personal supervision, that much fault was found. An American edition in three volumes was printed, for which Irving obtained

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three thousand dollars. The work was favorably received by the critics, and has become the standard history of the voyages of Columbus. Mr. Alexander H. Everett, whose connection with the idea of the work has been related, thus speaks of it in "The North-American Review," of which he became the editor: "This is one of those works which are at the same time the delight of readers and the despair of critics. It is as nearly perfect as any work well can be; and there is, therefore, little or nothing left for the reviewer but to write at the bottom of every page, as Voltaire said he should be obliged to do if he published a commentary on Racine, '*Pulchre! bene! optime!*'"[1] A writer, who, from his own investigations of the Spanish documents relating to this period, and his historic genius, is surely a competent critic, — William H. Prescott, — says that "Irving's task has been executed in a manner which must secure to the historian a share in the imperishable renown of his subject."[2] He also calls it "the noblest monument to the memory of Columbus."[3] Lord Jeffrey ventures the prediction that "it will supersede all former works on the same subject, and never be itself superseded."[4] This success must have been the more cheering to Irving when Moore had

[1] January, 1829; p. 103.
[2] Ferdinand and Isabella, vol. ii. p. 133. [3] Id., ii. p. 509.
[4] Edinburgh Review, September, 1828, p. 32.

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just failed in his "Life of Sheridan," and even Scott in his "Life of Napoleon."

Early in March, 1828, after parting with his brother Peter, who went to Paris broken in health, Irving started, in company with two gentlemen in the Russian consular service, for a ramble in those regions of Southern Spain whose romantic history he was afterwards to celebrate. Attended by an escort of Spaniards, — whose chief recommendation seems to have been that they had themselves been robbers, — the little party proceeded through the wildest and most romantic parts of Spain, and the stronghold of outlaws. Irving's letters paint most delightfully the Elysian scenery of Andalusia and the shining Guadalquivir, where "every mountain-summit spreads before you a mass of history filled with places renowned for some wild and heroic achievement." The contrast of Andalusia and Castile thrills him with delight, and he breaks out in this rhapsody: "Good heavens! after passing two years amidst the burning wastes of Castile, to be let loose to rove at large over this fragrant and lovely land! What a fulness of pure and healthful pleasure gushes into the heart! and how do we look back with distaste upon the pale and artificial life of the city, and wonder how we could have condemned ourselves to its formal and frivolous routine!" A letter written in the marble halls of the Alhambra de-

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scribes the ruins of this once splendid palace of Granada. Its romance and grandeur have departed; and the imagination, in its efforts to summon forth the pictures of the past, is checked by "the jargon of an Andalusian peasant who is setting out rose-bushes, and the song of a pretty Andalusian girl who shows the Alhambra." Irving sought for the forgotten portal out of which King Boabdil passed when the sad sovereign took his last departure from his surrendered palace. The tradition related that the portal had been walled up in accordance with the monarch's request that no one should ever enter where he went out. Having satisfied his curiosity in exploring the deserted halls of the Alhambra, and taken a last look at the remains of Granada from the height where Boabdil shed his parting tears over his lost kingdom, and which still bears the name *El suspiro del Moro*, Irving passed over those arid wastes that typified the desolation of the Moorish kingdom, through the solitary passes of the mountains where the frequent crosses mark where the murdered have fallen by the hands of robbers, on to the port of Malaga. From this point he proceeded to Gibraltar, and thence to Cadiz, whence he embarked for Seville.

At this latter place Irving resolved to remain until he could prepare "The Conquest of Granada" for the press. Here he again met Wilkie

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the artist, and with him visited the principal attractions of the city. He found the library a small collection, but containing some valuable documents. These he was not permitted to use without a special permit from the king. Through the kindness of Mr. Everett this was finally obtained, but not until four months had passed away.

After spending some time in the city, he removed to a cottage in the country, thinking thus to escape the extreme heat of summer. This retreat was surrounded by a high wall, and at sunset the keeper locked the gates. Although only about two miles from Seville, the cottage was in an immense plain, from which the hot winds swept like the vapor of a furnace. The dwelling itself, however, was well sheltered by a garden of orange and citron trees, and a porch netted over with cooling vines. Here, in company with John Nalder Hall, a young Englishman who was in delicate health, he spent the summer, occasionally visiting the city to consult the library. His life was secluded and laborious; but he found much satisfaction in it. "What *soirée* in Madrid," he writes to a friend, "could repay me for a calm, delicious evening, passed here among the old trees of the garden, in untroubled thought or unbroken revery? or what splendor of ballroom, or court itself, can equal the glory of sunset, or the serene mag-

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nificence of the moon and stars shining so clearly above me?"

His quiet life was interrupted by a short visit to Palos, the little port whence Columbus sailed for the New World. At Moguer, about a league from Palos, he found the descendants of the Pinzons, the coadjutors of Columbus; and with one of these he visited the village. In describing this historic place, he says, —

"What surprised me was, to find no semblance of a seaport. There was neither wharf nor landing-place, — nothing but a naked river-bank, with the hulk of a ferry-boat (which, I was told, carried passengers to Huelva) lying high and dry on the sands, deserted by the tide. Palos, though it has doubtless dwindled away from its former size, can never have been important as to extent and population. If it possessed warehouses on the beach, they have disappeared. It is at present a mere village of the poorest kind, and lies nearly a quarter of a mile from the river, in a hollow among hills. It contains a few hundred inhabitants, who subsist principally by laboring in the fields and vineyards. Its race of merchants and mariners is extinct. There are no vessels belonging to the place, nor any show of traffic, excepting at the season of fruit and wine, when a few mystics and other light barks anchor in the river to collect the produce of the neighborhood. The people are totally ignorant, and it is probable that the greater part of them scarce know even the name of America. Such is the place whence sallied forth the enterprise for the discovery of the Western world!"[1]

[1] The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus, Appendix, No. 38.

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Here stands the Convent of La Rabida, at whose gate Columbus, when a poor beggar, asked for bread and water for his child. Here is the Church of St. George, from whose porch Columbus first proclaimed to the people of Palos the order of the court that they should supply him with ships for his voyage of discovery. Yet these wretched villagers, when Irving visited them, took no local pride in the achievement that has made their dirty hamlet historic.

After a short stay at a country-seat near the town of St. Mary's, — from which he and his friend Hall were driven by the fear of fever, — and afterwards at a retreat near by called the "Caracol," Irving returned to Seville to make researches in the archives of the Indias. While here, he received a number of invitations to perform literary work. Murray offered him a thousand pounds to edit a monthly magazine in London, and promised a hundred guineas each for contributions to "The Quarterly Review." The periodical labor involved in the work of an editor was repulsive to Irving, even after his long experience in the toils of authorship; and to write for "The Quarterly" was to violate his feelings of patriotism. "His review," he says to Mr. Everett, "has been so hostile to our country, that I cannot think of writing a line for it." Another proposition came from the Scotch poet Allan Cunning-

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ham, to supply an article for a Christmas work, for which he was offered from fifty to a hundred pounds. But a more pressing claim upon his pen came in the form of an announcement that an American abridgment of his "Life of Columbus" was soon to be issued. Determined to prevent a piracy of his labors, or at least to "shoal the pirate," he resolutely set to work, and in nineteen days prepared a condensation which filled one volume of about five hundred pages. Every man, woman, and child, who understood English, and could be obtained to work upon it, was employed to make a copy for America, and another was forwarded to Murray. Irving received six thousand dollars from the Carvills of New York for this abridgment, and the right to print a second edition of the unabridged Life. No charge was made to Murray, who, by a large sale of the compendium, saved himself from loss in the small returns from the original work. The threatened epitome was never published.

While Irving was engaged in this labor, his friend Hall died. He missed him sadly during the remainder of his stay in these lonely regions, where men of English speech were few. He refers to him with the affection of a brother. The two had formed a compact, suggested by a whim of Hall's, that Hall should pay Irving a visit in the spirit, that they might solve the mystery of spec-

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tral visitation, and demonstrate the certainty of a future life. After Hall's death, Irving mounted his friend's horse; and, amid the solemn surroundings of their old retreat near Seville, he invoked the apparition. Though Irving afterwards more than once invited his appearance, the mysteries of the silent land were never solved by his presence.

During the months spent in the south of Spain, Irving had been elaborating and retouching the rough sketch of the fall of Granada that had interrupted his biography of Columbus. It was written in the form of a chronicle, and pretended to be from the manuscript of Fray Antonio Agapida. This was only a new instance of his literary masquerading; for the pretended chronicler was as purely imaginary as Diedrich Knickerbocker or Geoffrey Crayon. He himself explains to us, in the introduction to a later edition, that "Fray Antonio Agapida was intended as a personification of the monkish zealots, who hovered about the sovereigns in their campaigns, marring the chivalry of the camp by the bigotry of the cloister, and chronicling in rapturous strains every act of intolerance towards the Moors." As regards its value as sober history, his own words will best suit our purpose: "Of course it will have no pretensions as a grave historical production, or a work of authority; but I cannot help thinking it will present a lively picture of the war, and one some-

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what characteristic of the times, so much of the materials having been drawn from contemporary historians."

"The Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada" was sold to Murray for two thousand guineas, the payments being made in notes that matured at periods so remote as to insure some previous return from the investment. The American copyright was sold for five years, to Messrs. Carey & Lea of Philadelphia, for $4,750. The work appeared in New York, April 10, 1829; but in London it was withheld long after it was printed, on account of the occupation of the public mind with the question of Catholic emancipation, and so did not appear there until May 23. According to Irving's own prophecy, it had "a good success among the literary," but was "heavy in the hands of mere readers for amusement." The book did not have an encouraging sale; but Coleridge called it "a masterpiece of romantic narrative." A careful revision afterwards brought it more strictly within the limits of history, and proved that there was "substantial foundation," as Irving himself says, "for his most extraordinary incidents."[1]

During his residence in Seville, Irving received a diploma as corresponding member of the Royal Academy of History at Madrid. Judging from

[1] London Quarterly Review, xliii. 55.

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the number of projected works for which notes had been taken, he must at this time have intended to devote the remainder of his life to the writing of history. As many as ten different works are enumerated among his papers; but only a few of these were ever finished for publication. It was not his intention, however, to arrange these materials in Spain. He had for a long time been anxious to see his friends and native land once more; and, though his long residence in other countries had made him at home in Europe, America began to have charms for him that no other spot could have. This long-repressed wish to see his country and kindred found expression in a letter to his brother Peter, in which he says, "I have a craving desire to return to America, which has been increasing on me for the two years past, until now it incessantly haunts my mind and occupies my dreams."

Notwithstanding this longing for home, the romantic associations of Granada threw a spell over his mind that drew him once more to the halls of the Alhambra. On the 1st of May, 1829, in company with his friend Prince Dolgorouki of the Russian legation at Madrid, he left Seville for a horseback-ride through the passes of the Sierra Nevada to the ancient palace of the Moorish kings. Here, by the kindness of the governor, they were quartered in the apartments in the

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Alhambra assigned to that officer, who preferred to remain down in the city rather than occupy the lonely halls of the palace. Here Irving was surprised by a visit from his nephew Edgar, son of Ebenezer, and a midshipman in the navy. The departure of his nephew and the prince soon after their arrival left Irving alone in the Alhambra with the old dame who prepared his meals, and the bright-eyed girl and ragged youth who waited upon him. For a time the weather was gloomy and cold; and as he strolled about the marble halls, or breakfasted in the Saloon of the Ambassadors or the Court of Lions in solitary grandeur, none but bats and owls beheld his stateliness. He formed one acquaintance in the city, however, that he highly prized. This was the Duke of Gor, who paid him every attention, inviting him to his house, and offering the free use of his library, which was rich in rare manuscripts. Through the kindness of this gentleman Irving procured admission to the old Jesuit library of the university, where, with the keys to the bookcases, he spent whole days ransacking their curious treasures. If the weather at first diminished his enjoyment of the Alhambra, the warm summer months brought ample compensation. The beauties of the scenery enchanted him, filling his mind with pictures of the old Moorish days when princes gathered in the halls of the palace. Having removed from

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the governor's apartments to a room built by either Charles V. or Philip, in a remote part of the old building, he thus describes his new quarters: —

"One of my windows looks into the little garden of Lindaraxa. The citron-trees are full of blossoms, and perfume the air; and the fountain throws up a beautiful jet of water. On the opposite side of the garden is a window, opening into the saloon of Las dos Hermanas, through which I have a view of the Fountain of Lions, and a distant peep into the gloomy halls of the Abencerrages. Another window of my room looks out upon the deep valley of the Darro, and commands a fine view of the Generalife. I am so in love with this apartment, that I can hardly force myself from it to take my promenades. I sit by my window until late at night, enjoying the moonlight, and listening to the sounds of the fountains and the singing of the nightingales; and I have walked up and down the Chateaubriand Gallery (so called because that writer engraved his name on the wall) until midnight. There is something so completely solitary and tranquil in thus being shut up in the centre of this great deserted palace." [1]

When Irving left Seville he had packed his trunks for New York, intending after a tour in Andalusia to embark for England, and, after making some literary arrangements in London, to bid farewell to his friends and relatives in Europe, and sail for America in the following autumn. This plan was broken up by his appointment under the new president, Andrew Jackson, as secretary of legation to the court of St. James.

[1] Life and letters, vol. ii. pp. 393, 349.

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The announcement reached him July 18, 1829, while he was still enjoying the cool shades of the Alhambra. His reluctance at leaving this "most delicious abode" of his life, joined with an aversion to the responsibilities of office, would have led him to decline the appointment, had it not been for the desires of his friends. The office had been obtained without his knowledge or the solicitations of his relatives, and was proffered at a time when he was independent of its emoluments. His only ambition was literary, and he shrank from the partisanship usually expected of those occupying political stations. The suggestions of some friends, however, that the position was of too low a rank for his merits, had no weight with him; for, said he, "It is better that half a dozen should say, 'Why is he seated so low down?' than that any one should casually say, 'What right has he to be at the top?'" Accordingly, he wrote to Mr. McLane, the newly-appointed minister, that he would join him in London as soon as circumstances would permit. While thus accepting the appointment, he wrote to his brother, that if he found the office irksome, or detrimental to his literary plans, he would at once resign.

Leaving the Alhambra on the 29th of July, he started for England with a young Oxonian named Sneyd. They travelled in a covered cart called a *Tartana*, drawn by a mule, and containing a mat-

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tress, on which they reclined to escape the fatigue and excessive heat of the Spanish summer. On their way they passed by the estates of the Duke of Gor, who had directed his tenants to entertain them in the most complimentary manner. Their road lay through a wild region infested with robbers, and the frequent crosses marked the spots where murders had been committed. Although they saw four robbers who had just been captured, and a robber chieftain who had been shot, they passed through the defiles of the mountains unmolested. They found travelling pretty much the same as in the days of Don Quixote, being obliged to furnish their own provisions and beds at the *posadas* and *ventas*. Having crossed the Pyrenees, they proceeded to Paris, where Irving remained a short time to visit with his brother Peter. His companion preceded him to England; and when, two weeks later, Irving arrived in London, he was shocked to hear of his death from a fever contracted in the journey.

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CHAPTER VI.

DIPLOMATIC LIFE IN LONDON.

1829–1832.

ON his arrival in London, Irving found himself surrounded with diplomatic duties, owing to the illness of the minister, Mr. McLane. As that gentleman was a stranger in the city, he greatly needed assistance in acquainting himself with the ceremonial life of the court; and Irving's experience proved of the greatest advantage to him. By this service Irving was exempted from much of the clerical labor which belonged to his position, and his duties were found to be less irksome to him than he had anticipated. After the first pressure of business was removed, he once more entered upon the enjoyment of those literary alliances which he had made during his previous residence in England.

At the time of his arrival, Moore's "Life of Byron" was nearly ready for the press, and was anxiously awaited as one of the most important

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works of the age. Irving was solicited to secure favorable terms for its publication in America, and succeeded in obtaining fifteen hundred dollars for the American ownership of the work. This, added to four thousand guineas from Murray, gave Moore a handsome recompense for a noble work. Irving's attempt to secure for Godwin a similar bargain was wholly unsuccessful. That writer's great fame as an author, combined with Irving's influence, failed to procure even one hundred dollars for the manuscript of "Cloudesley."

The estimation in which Irving was now held in England as a man of letters is evinced by two distinguished honors that were conferred upon him. On the 5th of April, 1830, he received official notice that one of the two royal medals, containing fifty guineas of gold, had been awarded to him by the Royal Society of Literature. The character of this honor is the more readily appreciated when it is remembered that the other medal was bestowed upon Henry Hallam, the author of "The Middle Ages" and "The History of Literature." Soon afterward the degree of doctor of laws was conferred upon Irving by the University of Oxford. While he, no doubt, duly valued the honor implied in the bestowment of this degree, he modestly regarded himself as unworthy of such high academic distinction, and declined to make

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use of the title. In reply to a request from the author of "Reveries of a Bachelor," Donald G. Mitchell, asking permission to dedicate one of his books to him, Irving wrote, "I would only suggest that in your dedication you would omit the LL.D,—a learned dignity urged upon me very much 'against the stomach of my sense,' and to which I have never laid claim."

Irving met the prospective King William IV., a little before his coronation, at a ball given by the Duke of Wellington. He was pleased with the king's affability, and disposition to make others happy; and ventured the prediction, that, if he developed as he gave promise, he would make "the most popular king that ever sat on the English throne." Soon afterwards he saw the Duke of Orleans made King of France, with the title of "Louis Philippe," at Paris. His accession to the throne was marked by satisfaction without enthusiasm, owing to the fact that the Parisians were "a little exhausted by their recent excitement,"—a reflection of some significance to the student of French history.

Irving had the pleasure of seeing once more his old friend John Randolph, then American minister at St. Petersburg, and "more meagre and eccentric than ever." In a letter to his brother Peter, Irving tells a story of Randolph's presentation to the Emperor of Russia. It had been reported that

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Randolph knelt as a mark of respect when he came into the sovereign's presence. The minister claimed, however, that he did not kneel, and offered this explanation: As one of his legs was shorter than the other, he approached with a limping gait; and, as he was about to salute the emperor, his majesty, supposing that he was in the act of kneeling, made a movement to prevent it, and cried, "No, no!" When he was presented at court in London, in company with Irving and Mr. McLane, he insisted on going without the court dress. At the entrance to the ante-chamber he was challenged, and obtained admission only after Irving's explanation. He was eyed narrowly by the ambassadors; and, when he appeared in the presence-chamber, the Duke of Sussex inquired of Irving, with a suppressed laugh, "Who's your friend Hokey Pokey?" Irving, with patriotism more admirable than easy, replied with dignified emphasis, "That, sir, is John Randolph, United-States minister at Russia, and one of the most distinguished orators of the United States."

If the question about Randolph savors of disrespect for the representatives of the United States on the part of the British court, it would be an erroneous inference to conclude that there was at this time such feeling towards our country. Irving's own words are of interest as showing how the young Republic was regarded by the ministry

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and the crown only sixteen years after the battle of New Orleans. He says, —

"Our diplomatic situation at this court is as favorable and gratifying as we could desire, being treated with marked respect and friendliness by the royal family, and by the various members of the administration, both of the old and new ministry; and all this appears to be spontaneous, as, while we have fulfilled all the usual forms of mere civility and etiquette, we have never courted any favor or attention, but have rather held ourselves in reserve, and let the advance be made from the other party.

"I trust the general effect of our mission here will be to place the relations of the two countries on a more amiable footing generally, and at the same time to establish freer intercourse personally for our diplomacy at this court, where it was formerly received with coldness and reserve."[1]

His official life had interfered with Irving's literary productiveness; and, at the end of the year after his return to London, little had been done in the way of writing. He had written a review of "The Conquest of Granada" for "The Quarterly" at Murray's request, and received fifty guineas for this service. As he has been charged with the indelicacy of puffing himself by reviewing his own works, it is important to note that the article referred to is simply explanatory, and contains no word of commendation of his work.[2] A projected History of the United States had been abandoned

[1] Life and Letters, vol. ii. p. 444.

[2] See London Quarterly, May, 1830, pp. 55, 80.

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for a Life of Washington, which he designed to be the crowning work of his life. The first labors upon this biography were destined to be long postponed, however; so that it finally became, as he wished, his last work. His Spanish materials had occupied some of his attention; and on Dec. 17, 1830, he received from Murray notes to the amount of five hundred guineas for "The Voyages of the Companions of Columbus." Arrangements were made with Carey & Lea of Philadelphia to print three thousand copies, for which they were to pay fifteen hundred dollars copyright. The work was well received, but added little to the author's reputation.

In June, 1831, Mr. McLane was invited to accept a seat in the cabinet at Washington. After his return home Irving was made *chargé d'affaires*, though with the salary of secretary. Notwithstanding his strong desire to rid himself of the responsibilities of diplomatic life, he consented to hold the position until the arrival of Mr. Van Buren, the newly-appointed minister to the court of St. James. His longing for a return to America, however, was again predominant, and, joined with his general dislike for political life, even in its least distasteful form, made him look forward almost impatiently for the hour of his release. He says, in his disgust with political follies, "I am sick to very loathing of the correspondences

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with which our papers have been filled for some time past; and my only consolation is, that the European papers are so taken up with their own concerns, and the public mind so bewildered with reform, revolution, and cholera-morbus, that there is no space or leisure for comments upon our follies." On the 20th of September he resigned from the legation, with the intention of proceeding to Birmingham for a visit to his relatives, and to prepare some manuscript for the press.

Before Irving left London, he met once more, and for the last time, that "golden-hearted" man whose kindness had been so valuable to him earlier in his career, and for whom he had the most tender affection. Sir Walter Scott spent a short time in London on his way to Italy, whither he was going to seek a restoration of the health he had lost by the herculean labors to pay off the enormous debt that crushed out his life. He was even then — though he lived more than a year longer — a dying man. The old fire no longer gleamed in his eye, save when, at distant intervals, it shot into a lurid flame as he strove to arouse his old nature. Irving dined with him in private, with his daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Lockhart. Scott attempted to be himself once more; but his stories were pointless, his descriptions feeble, and the charm that once drew an admiring world around him was wholly gone. Irving bade

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him a last farewell; and, after a fruitless journey, Scott returned to Abbotsford to die, in reality, if not by confession, a broken-hearted man.

After a short tour in the country, in which he visited Birmingham, Sheffield, Hardwick Hall, Newstead Abbey, and other points of interest, Irving returned to London with the hope of preparing a work on the Alhambra for the holidays. The intense excitement of the public mind on political topics rendered the book-trade so gloomy, that he resolved not to venture upon publication. In December he made a second tour, in company with Mr. Van Buren and his son, to show them some places of interest, and especially to acquaint them with the festivities of an old-time English Christmas. After a visit to Oxford, Blenheim, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick Castle, Kenilworth, and Birmingham, they spent Christmas-week at Barlborough Hall, where many obsolete games and customs were still in vogue. Having enjoyed the festivities, they visited Newstead Abbey, the former seat of Lord Byron, so charmingly described in "The Crayon Miscellany." Irving's previous acquaintance with Colonel Wildman, the proprietor, procured them an invitation to the hospitalities of the abbey. Here Irving occupied Lord Byron's own room, still preserved as he had left it, and slept in his bed. Where the high altar stood, in what was once the interior of the church

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was the monument to Byron's dog, which the loving master had erected to his memory. The rooms occupied by various sovereigns in their progresses were still known by the names of their royal occupants. The mysterious stories of the ghost-ridden abbey, of the "black friar," and the "woman in white," formed an episode of no little interest. The added charm of being in the very heart of Sherwood Forest, beneath whose ancient oaks Robin Hood and his merry men blew their robbers' horns, made the old abbey the centre of unusual poetic interest.

While Irving was at Newstead Abbey he received a letter from William Cullen Bryant, whose star had already risen above the horizon, presenting a copy of his collected poems, soon to be published in New York, and requesting permission to use Irving's name as reference in procuring an English publisher. Mr. Bryant desired to effect a sale, if possible; but he was especially anxious that his little volume "might be published by a respectable bookseller in a respectable manner." He had forwarded a copy to Murray, with the hope of obtaining his imprint. The gloomy condition of the trade had affected the fortunes even of this "prince of booksellers," and he declined undertaking the publication. Irving offered the poems to Andrews, a fashionable bookseller, who agreed to print an edition if Irving would edit the volume, and write a

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dedication. This Irving kindly consented to do. In the midst of the printing, Andrews became alarmed at the couplet, in "Marion's Men," —

> "And the British soldier trembles
> When Marion's name is heard," —

dreading the offence that might be taken by the public. Irving unwarrantably altered the first line, exposing himself to rebuke; which, however, never came from Mr. Bryant. The volume was dedicated to Samuel Rogers; and Mr. Bryant was thus introduced to a new public, with whom he has been a favorite ever since.[1]

The nomination of Mr. Van Buren as minister to England caused a conflict among the senators when the Senate came to act upon its confirmation. Mr. Van Buren was opposed by Webster and Clay, and the casting-vote of John C. Calhoun decided the case against him. The rejection was regarded by Irving as "a very short-sighted and mean-spirited act of hostility." He believed that the vote of the Senate would go far towards "ultimately elevating Van Buren to the presidential chair." The disappointed minister received the news of his rejection just at the time when the Queen's birthday was about to be celebrated with public ceremonies, and this added to the

[1] The correspondence on this subject is given in the work on Bryant in this series.

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keenness of his mortification. Irving kindly represented through the newspapers that Mr. Van Buren was to act until the end of the congressional session, and advised him to remain in England, and be present at the state dinners. This Mr. Van Buren did, and was treated by the royal family with the undiminished regard which his gentle and amiable manners seem to have deserved.

After arranging with Colburn & Bentley for the publication of "The Alhambra," for which he received a thousand guineas, Irving prepared for his return to America. The work was appropriately dedicated to David Wilkie the painter, who had been his companion in Spain both at Madrid and Seville. The historian Prescott called it a "beautiful Spanish 'Sketch-Book;'" and "The Westminster Review" declared, that, "as a work of art, it has few rivals among modern publications."[1] Edward Everett said, in "The North-American Review," "The subjects . . . are all wrought up with great felicity, and are among the most finished and elegant specimens of style to be found in the language."[2] A French translation was soon printed in Paris, where it received favorable notices from the critical journals. An American edition was published soon after Irving's return to this country, for which he received three thousand dollars.

[1] July, 1832, p. 132. [2] October, 1832, p. 277.

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After seventeen years of absence from his native land, Irving sailed for home in April, 1832; embarking from Havre, where he bade farewell to Peter, who remained in France on account of ill health.

His reception in New York was most flattering. In these years he had become a celebrity, not only in England, but throughout Europe, and was regarded as one of the most distinguished of living men of letters. If his friends were pleased at his return, he was not less gratified at seeing once more the city of his birth, now grown quite out of his recognition like the old companions of his youth. "I have been in a tumult of enjoyment ever since my arrival," he writes; "am pleased with every thing and every body, and as happy as mortal being can be."

Among other marks of respect was a public dinner given in his honor, at which Chancellor Kent presided. It was one of the most successful ovations ever held in the city; and he found himself surrounded by the most distinguished of his countrymen, all striving to do him honor. Though little accustomed to public speaking, and suffering from a nervous apprehension of failure so common among men of high ideals and little experience in oratory, he made a speech on this occasion, and acquitted himself to the satisfaction of his friends. He dwelt particularly upon his

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long absence, and the imputation of estrangement from the land of his birth, but displayed such emotion in the allusion as to refute the charge. He was continually interrupted with bursts of applause, which became most enthusiastic and prolonged when he signified his intention of remaining in America during the remainder of his life. Among the most felicitous toasts of the occasion was that of the eloquent John Duer to

"THE MEMORY OF THE DUTCH HERODOTUS, DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER."

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CHAPTER VII.

TEN YEARS IN AMERICA.

1832-1842.

IRVING'S delight with his own country, and especially with the marked improvements made during his absence, induced him to travel extensively soon after his return. At Washington he found Mr. McLane, who was then Secretary of the Treasury. He met President Jackson, with whom he was favorably impressed, as "truly an old *Roman, . . . with a little dash of the Greek.*" The president hinted at some appointment; but Irving simply expressed his gratification at the unsolicited honors already bestowed, and informed him that he wished for nothing. He also renewed his acquaintance with Clay, who was then in the Senate. Public dinners were tendered him at Philadelphia and Baltimore; but these were declined. During a visit to the Catskills the "veritable haunts" of Rip Van Winkle were pointed out by the local sages, one of whom claimed to be

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a lineal descendant of the venerable Rip! Boston, the White Mountains, Springfield, Saratoga, and Trenton Falls, were included in his pilgrimages; and he was everywhere pleased with what he saw. His cosmopolitan life had not rendered him insensible to the attractions of his own land, but seems rather to have heightened his appreciation. "My tour thus far," he says after visiting the above-mentioned places, "has been through a continued succession of beautiful scenes: indeed, the natural beauties of the United States strike me infinitely more than they did before my residence in Europe. The accommodations for travellers also have improved in a wonderful degree. In no country out of England have I found such excellent hotels, and such good fare in places remote from cities."

In August Irving undertook a tour of far greater extent than the excursions already mentioned. Having accidentally met a Mr. Ellsworth on a steamboat on Lake Erie, he was invited to join a company of Indian commissioners, of which Mr. Ellsworth was one, in a visit to the tribes of the Far West. Proceeding through Ohio to Cincinnati, the party there took the steamboat down the Ohio River to its confluence with the Mississippi, and up that river to St. Louis. The voyage was full of refreshment to Irving, who enjoyed the grand scenery of the primeval forests. Excitement was added to the passage by frequent sand-

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bars, and a collision with another steamboat, that came near being fatal to the one on which Irving was a passenger. At Fort Jefferson he saw the famous Black Hawk, who had been captured in the recent Indian war, and whom he describes as "an old man, upwards of seventy, emaciated and enfeebled by the sufferings he had experienced." Having crossed the rolling prairies of Missouri on horseback, he hunted buffalo in Arkansas, bearing off the tongue of one of these lords of the plains as a trophy of his skill. After visiting Fort Gibson, then one of the most remote points of the frontier, he returned to the Mississippi, descended the river to New Orleans, and thence proceeded, in his toilsome and tedious journey through Alabama, Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia, to Washington, arriving there in December.

He reached the capital when the whole nation was at the height of political excitement over the nullification act of South Carolina, and when the President was about to issue his proclamation on the relation of the States to the General Government. Irving espoused the cause of national authority, and regarded the resolutions of John C. Calhoun on State rights as unsound, though he entertained doubts of the perpetuity of the Union. He remained in Washington until April in order to hear the discussion, and was intensely interested in the proceedings. "The grand debate in the

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Senate," he says, "occupied my mind as intensely for three weeks as did ever a dramatic representation. I heard almost every speech, good and bad; and did not lose a word of any of the best. I think my close attendance on the legislative halls has given me an acquaintance with the nature and operation of our institutions, and the character and concerns of the various parts of the Union, that I could not have learned from books for years."

On his way to New York, Irving made a visit to Baltimore, where he met John P. Kennedy, then first becoming famous by the publication of "Swallow Barn." Though at present little known as a writer, Mr. Kennedy enjoyed considerable popularity in his lifetime, and will continue to be remembered by the more devoted students of American literature as a writer of the same school as Irving, though inferior in both the magnitude and finish of his works. "The Red Book," a kind of imitation of "Salmagundi," was his first purely literary production, and consists of lively social gossip on contemporary events. His "Swallow Barn" is a collection of sketches of rural life in Virginia, connected by a slender thread of narrative. His most enduring work is a "Life of William Wirt." "His books," says Duyckinck, "abound in delightful rural pictures, and sketches of character, which, in easy style and quiet genial humor, recall 'The Sketch-Book' and 'Brace-

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bridge Hall.' The author has himself acknowledged the relationship in the graceful tribute to Irving which forms the dedication to the volume."[1]

Nearly two years passed by after his return to America before Irving adjusted himself to literary work. John Jacob Astor, the old fur-trader, then a New-York millionnaire, had long been urging him to write the history of a colony that had been founded at the mouth of the Columbia River in Oregon, and called Astoria. The drudgery of collecting and arranging the materials for this work was probably the chief impediment in the way of Irving's undertaking it. Finally, however, arrangements were made for his nephew, Pierre M. Irving, to do the preliminary work; and Irving promised to give it form, as Mr. Astor insisted upon its appearing under his name. While the preparatory work was in progress, he prepared for the press a series of sketches under the general title of "Crayon Miscellany." These articles appeared in numbers like those of "The Sketch-Book," and of about the same size. The first number was published in April, 1835, and consisted of one article, "A Tour on the Prairies,"—an account of his travels in the West. The second followed in May, containing "Abbotsford,"—relating the story

[1] Duyckinck's Cyclopædia of American Literature, vol. ii. p. 220.

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of his visit to Scott, — and "Newstead Abbey," describing his visit to the seat of Lord Byron. The third number appeared in September under the title of "Legends of the Conquest of Spain," including "The Legend of Don Roderick," "The Legend of the Subjugation of Spain," and "The Legend of the Family of Count Julian." For these numbers he received fifteen hundred dollars each from Carey, Lea, & Blanchard, of Philadelphia, for the right to print five thousand. He obtained from Murray four hundred pounds for the first, six hundred pounds for the second, and one hundred pounds for the third number. In one of his letters he expresses his satisfaction with the price, though it was less than he had formerly received for his works, owing to the "inundation of cheap publications" which had brought down the market. About this time he arranged with his American publishers to issue all his former publications, excepting the abridgment of "The Life and Voyages of Columbus," for an annual payment of eleven hundred dollars; so that he looked forward to "easy times in pecuniary matters" for the rest of his life.

The "Crayon Miscellany" was favorably received by the critics and by the public. Edward Everett said of "The Tour on the Prairies," "It can scarcely be called a book of travels, for there is too much painting of manners and scenery, and

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too little statistics; it is not a novel, for there is no story; and it is not a romance, for it is all true. It is a sort of sentimental journey; a romantic excursion, in which nearly all the elements of several different kinds of writing are beautifully and gayly blended into a production almost *sui generis*.[1] "Abbotsford" and "Newstead Abbey" have always been favorites among literary people, and are charming fragments of blended narrative and description. "The Conquest of Spain" has not been published in the editions of his complete works. Concerning these legends, Irving said in a letter to his brother, —

"I have preferred giving these writings in this form [that of detached sketches], rather than giving them the more pretending name of history or chronicle. It enables me to indulge with less reserve or disquiet in those apocryphal details which are so improbable, yet so picturesque and romantic. Did I claim for these wild medleys of truth and fiction the dignity and credence of history, I should throw a discredit upon my regular historical works. It is this scruple that has lain in the way of the publication of these writings, when I contemplated publishing them under a more imposing form."[2]

In the spring of 1835 Irving purchased ten acres of ground on the eastern bank of the Hudson, two miles south of Tarrytown. The spot was

[1] North-American Review, July, 1835, pp. 5, 6.
[2] Life and Letters, vol. iii. p. 74.

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already famous as the site of the castle of Heer Van Tassel, and surrounded by all the romantic associations of Sleepy Hollow. He had written of it in "The Sketch-Book:" "If ever I should wish for a retreat, whither I might steal from the world and its distractions, and dream quietly away the remainder of a troubled life, I know of none more promising than this little valley." There was on the grounds at the time of purchase a small stone cottage, once inhabited by one of the Van Tassels. Here Irving resolved to prepare "a little nookery," "quaint and unpretending," where his relatives might have a summer home, and himself an asylum for his old age. The cottage is known wherever Irving's works are read as "Sunnyside." It nestles, half hidden by vines and trees, on the bank of the broad river, where it widens into the Tappan Zee. A few thousand dollars converted the little Dutch mansion into a pleasant dwelling, yet retaining with religious exactness the peculiarities of the old Dutch architecture. Irving called it "Wolfert's Roost" (or Rest), and narrated its history in the first of the sketches in the volume that bears that name. We may say in his own words, "Reader! the roost still exists. Time, which changes all things, is slow in its operations on a Dutchman's dwelling. The stout Jacob Van Tassel, it is true, sleeps with his fathers, and his great goose-gun with him; yet his stronghold still

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bears the impress of its Dutch origin. Odd rumors have gathered about it, as they are apt to do about old mansions, like moss and weather-stains. The shade of Wolfert Acker still walks his unquiet rounds at night in the orchard; and a white figure has now and then been seen seated at a window, and gazing at the moon, from a room in which a young lady is said to have died of love and green apples."[1]

The summer and autumn were occupied in giving form to the materials which his nephew had collected for "Astoria," with occasional visits to the cottage, that was at the time undergoing remodelling. Mr. Astor's summer residence was at Hell Gate, a most delightful retreat in the midst of varied scenery. Here Irving made his home while engaged upon the book, in order to have the old gentleman's memory convenient for reference. Though this work must have been completed long before, it was not published until October, 1836. The English copyright was sold to Bentley for five hundred pounds, and the right to print five thousand copies was granted to Carey & Lea for four thousand dollars. The book met with unexpected success, and was widely read, notwithstanding the opinion of "Blackwood's Magazine," that "the narrative, though told with the grace of the writer, is necessarily dry."[2] Sydney Smith said, in a let-

[1] Wolfert's Roost, p. 28. [2] February, 1837, p. 169.

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ter to a friend, "I have read 'Astoria' with great pleasure: it is a book to put in your library, as an entertaining, well written — *very* well written — account of savage life on a most extensive scale."[1] "The London Spectator" declared that it is "the most finished narrative of such a series of adventures that ever was written, whether with regard to plan or execution. . . . The composition we are inclined to rate the *chef-d'œuvre* of Washington Irving."[2] This last estimate of the work is excessive, and the truth is better expressed in the more moderate words of Edward Everett: "A great variety of somewhat discordant materials is brought into a consistent whole, of which the parts have a due reference to each other; and some sketches of life and traits of humor come fresh from the pen of Geoffrey Crayon."[3]

About the time that "Astoria" was published Irving moved into his cottage with his brother Peter, who had returned from Europe to live at Sunnyside. The "little nookery," while far from being pretentious in its dimensions, was nevertheless more costly than its size would indicate, owing to the peculiar fastidiousness of its owner in having all his ideas embodied. "For such a small edifice," he says, "it has a prodigious swal-

[1] Smith's Letters and Correspondence, vol. ii.
[2] London Spectator, Oct. 22, 1836.
[3] North-American Review, January, 1837, p. 200.

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low, and reminds me of those little fairy changelings called Killcrops, which eat and eat, and are never the fatter."

When the brothers were cosily ensconced in their bachelor's nest, and, shut in by the snows of winter, Irving had begun to apply himself assiduously with his pen, two rude attacks were made upon him in the periodical press. The first came from one Joseph Seawell Jones, who had taken offence at an incidental statement in Irving's "Creole Village," a sketch published in an annual called "Magnolia." Mr. Jones had written a history of North Carolina, and thereby entangled himself in a dispute about a trifling matter, — the correspondence of manners and customs in that State and those of the age of Elizabeth in England. Irving had said in "The Creole Village," "Virginia cherishes peculiarities characteristic of the days of Elizabeth and Sir Walter Raleigh."[1] For this innocent remark, the irate Jones, who arrogated all this remnant of "peculiarities" to North Carolina, gave Irving a castigating with the lash of coarse personal allusion. With his customary dignity and magnanimity, Irving addressed a letter to the editor of "The New-York American," in which the attack appeared, quietly explaining that he had no intention of rousing the gentleman's wrath, and expressing his "great commisera-

[1] Wolfert's Roost, p. 38.

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tion for any person laboring under a state of mental irritability."

Only ten days passed by before another newspaper attack appeared, which touched Irving in a more sensitive spot, both on account of the imputation of dishonor which it contained, and the source from which it seemed to emanate. William Leggett had been associated with William Cullen Bryant in conducting "The Evening Post," and had recently started a weekly called "The Plaindealer." In an early number of the latter periodical an article appeared on "Mutilating Books," written by the editor. In this are two charges: (1) that Irving had been guilty of "literary pusillanimity" in changing the language of poems, "every word of which will live long after even 'Bracebridge Hall' and 'Knickerbocker' are forgotten;" and (2) that, in publishing a book of his own ("A Tour on the Prairies"), Irving had stooped to flatter his own countrymen in professions which were "studiously omitted" in the English edition. The first charge has reference to Irving's alteration of the line in Bryant's poem, the story of which has been related. That it was impolitic in him to touch even a word of the poems is plain; but his motive was not only pure, but magnanimous. It will be remembered that the only condition on which he could procure for Mr. Bryant an audience with the British public at that time

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was that he should edit the poems. In the midst of printing, the luckless line excited the suspicions of the publisher, who saw in its retention the loss of his investment. Irving saw also that it would affect Mr. Bryant's reception by the English public, and probably provoke a storm of indignation. It is a satisfaction to know that Mr. Bryant, though he seems not to have approved of the change, never made complaint, but, on the contrary, warmly appreciated Irving's service, as he surely loved his memory.

The implication of Irving's duplicity in introducing his own book differently to the two great nations of his readers is too shameless for serious notice. The American introduction would have been wholly out of place in the English edition. The introduction was needed in America for reasons that are obvious to any one who has read it. As to Irving's desire to flatter his countrymen, his own manly words will serve us best: "When I thought they doubted me, I remained silent; when I found they believed in me, I spoke. I have never been in the habit of beguiling them by fulsome professions of patriotism, those cheap passports to public favor; and I think I might for once have been indulged in briefly touching a chord on which others have harped with so much advantage."

During his residence with Mr. Astor at Hell

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Gate, Irving had met a number of adventurers in the West, in whom he had taken an interest while preparing "Astoria" for the press. Among them was a Captain Bonneville, a man of intelligence, and a graduate of the Military Academy at West Point. He had been in the army, but had obtained leave of absence to make an exploring expedition in the regions of the West, about which Irving was engaged in writing. On his return he found that he had been given up as lost, and his name had been dropped from the army-roll. Some months later Irving again met the captain in Washington, where he was striving to regain his place in the army, and, pending the issue of his case, was occupied in making maps of the territory which he had explored, and writing a narrative of his adventures, with a view to publication. Irving bought his manuscript for a thousand dollars, — a bargain that was doubtless made as much with the view of assisting the impecunious captain as with the hope of personal profit. During the winter of 1837 this manuscript was revised by Irving, and enlarged with materials gathered from other sources, including his own observations. In March the result was given to the world under the title, "The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U.S.A., in the Rocky Mountains and the Far West." The English copyright was sold to Bentley for nine hundred pounds; and the American publishers,

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Carey & Lea, paid three thousand dollars for the work. The book is a pleasant narrative of exciting incidents; and the world has accepted the verdict of Chancellor Kent, that "these volumes, by reason of Mr. Irving's fine taste and attractive style, possess the power and the charms of romance."

Among the notable events of this year was a visit from Louis Napoleon, afterwards Emperor of France. He had been a captive on a French ship, but had been liberated at Norfolk. During his residence of two months in New York he spent a day at Sunnyside in company with a neighbor of Irving's whom he was visiting. Although his distinguished career was then unexpected, Irving greatly enjoyed the visit, and felt an interest in his guest.

Though Irving's tastes and ambitions were purely literary, he was on several occasions pressed to enter the arena of political life. In 1834 he had been invited by the Jackson party to allow his name to be used as a candidate for Congress, but had declined. In 1838 he was "unanimously and vociferously" nominated as Mayor of New-York City. In a letter on the subject, addressed to his old friend Gouverneur Kemble, then a member of Congress, he said, "I value my peace of mind too highly to suffer myself to be drawn into the vortex of New-York politics; which, not to speak

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profanely, is a perfect Hell Gate." This nomination had hardly been declined, when his old associate in the English mission, whose elevation to the presidency he had foretold, — Martin Van Buren, — invited him to a seat in his cabinet as Secretary of the Navy. Though his alleged reason for declining — that he was "too sensitive to endure the bitter personal hostility, and the slanders and misrepresentations of the press, which beset high station in this country" — was genuine, he did not wholly agree with the policy of Van Buren's administration. The most definite statement of his political views to be found in his writings is the following sentence in a letter to Kemble: "As far as I know my mind, I am thoroughly a republican, and attached from complete conviction to the institutions of my country; but I am a republican without gall, and have no bitterness in my creed."

The spring of 1838 was one of sadness to Irving. His brother William had died in 1821. John, who had been an honored judge for twenty years, fell a victim of overwork in March. Three months later, Peter, who had long been an invalid, followed his brother. The double blow left Irving in a condition of despondency, that deepened as he attempted to find relief in those literary pursuits in which Peter had been almost a partner. The affection for this brother was enhanced by the

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fact that his bachelor-life bound him closer to Washington than either of the others. Even the companionship of Ebenezer's family, who had taken up their residence at Sunnyside, did not wholly supply the place of the lost brother. It was only after repeated efforts that Irving could find satisfaction in the exercise of his pen.

The work upon which he engaged himself was "The History of the Conquest of Mexico." He had collected materials for it in Spain, and intended it to be a companion-work to his "Columbus." While he was busily occupied with it, and after he had spent some three months in digesting his materials, he accidentally met a friend of William H. Prescott's in a public library which he had visited to consult books on the subject of his history. When he learned that Mr. Prescott was engaged upon the same subject, Irving generously said, "Tell Mr. Prescott I abandon it to him, and am very happy to have this opportunity of testifying my high esteem for his talents, and my sense of the very courteous manner in which he has spoken of myself and my writings in his 'Ferdinand and Isabella,' though they interfered with a part of the subject of his history."

A most courteous correspondence ensued, begun by Mr. Prescott, in which that gentleman acknowledged his obligation to Irving for leaving the field to himself, and asked for his advice and assistance

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in the prosecution of his labors. Irving responded in the same kindly spirit, promising to send him whatever works were in his possession to which Mr. Prescott had not access. What makes the act of surrender the more generous on Irving's part is the fact that he had already sketched the first draught of his first volume, while Mr. Prescott had not gone beyond the accumulation of materials. This, however, he had done with a thoroughness that Irving would probably not have imitated, as Mr. Prescott had availed himself of all the usual sources of information on the subject, and spent fifteen hundred dollars in procuring books, manuscripts, and transcripts from Spain. While, no doubt, Mr. Prescott has given us a more valuable history than Irving was then prepared to furnish, we may well hesitate which to admire the more, — the production of Prescott, or the magnanimity of Irving. Some years later, after seeing and praising Mr. Prescott's work, Irving said in a letter to his nephew, —

"I doubt whether Mr. Prescott was aware of the extent of the sacrifice I made. This was a favorite subject, which had delighted my imagination ever since I was a boy. I had brought home books from Spain to aid me in it, and looked upon it as a pendant to my 'Columbus.' When I gave it up to him, I in a manner gave him up my bread; for I depended upon the profit of it to recruit my waning finances. I had no other subject at hand to supply its place. I was dismounted from my *cheval de bataille*, and have never

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been completely mounted since. Had I accomplished that work, my whole pecuniary situation would have been altered. . . . Mr. Prescott has justified the opinion I expressed at the time, — that he would treat the subject with more close and ample research than I should probably do, and would produce a work more thoroughly worthy of the theme. He has produced a work that does honor to himself and his country, and I wish him the full enjoyment of his laurels."[1]

The surrender of his theme to Prescott left Irving without a plan for literary work. In the days of leisure that followed he felt the need of some employment, and of replenishing his purse. He was thus induced to engage in writing for "The Knickerbocker," — a monthly magazine published in New York, and edited by Louis Gaylord Clark. He was to receive two thousand dollars a year for a monthly contribution to its pages. Many of the sketches and stories were afterwards collected into a volume, which he called "Wolfert's Roost." Among the papers printed in the magazine is a letter on "International Copyright," that deserves to be read by successive generations of American statesmen until a majority have learned to respect the opinion and apprehend the logic of the Father of Polite Literature in America. Though Irving thought it "rather late in the day to talk of justice to American statesmen," the men of a better day may see some shadow of reason in his language.[2]

[1] Life and Letters, vol. iii. pp. 143, 144.

[2] The letter is reprinted in his Life and Letters, vol. iii. pp. 149, 151.

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His mind had at last settled upon a Life of Washington; and he was beginning work upon it, when he received an appointment that changed all his plans. On the 10th of February, 1842, he was informed that he had been nominated by President Tyler as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to the court of Madrid. The suggestion of his name for the position originated with Daniel Webster, then Secretary of State. That eminent statesman paid Irving the delicate compliment of saying, in a letter on the subject of his appointment, "If a gentleman of more merit and higher qualifications had presented himself, great as is my personal regard for you, I should have yielded it to higher considerations." Though the nomination came unsolicited and unexpected, the attractions of Spanish scenes, and the sense of duty in response to a call so spontaneous on the part of the government, induced him to accept it. It was not without much disturbance of mind, however, that he could decide a question that involved a long separation from his kindred and his native land, which, he had declared, he never intended leaving. Believing that he could prosecute his labors upon his "Life of Washington" while engaged in diplomatic service, and regarding the appointment as the "crowning honor of his life," he resolved to submit to another exile from his native shores.

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About the time of Irving's appointment, Charles Dickens paid his first visit to America; and Irving was thus permitted to join in the honors bestowed upon the young novelist, who was then, though but thirty years old, already established in literature. Dickens had long associated Irving with his "pleasantest and happiest thoughts," and had "shaken hands autographically" with him across the Atlantic. Though Dickens returned to England, like a spoiled child, to cavil at the country that had honored him as a guest, he had no word of censure for Irving, of whom he had said, "There is no living writer, and there are very few among the dead, whose approbation I should feel so proud to earn." Among the last important events before Irving's departure for his post was the Dickens dinner in New York, at which Irving presided. His dread of speech-making has already been mentioned; but the following anecdote, related by Professor Felton of Harvard, will serve to illustrate the extent of his timidity: —

"I had the honor to be placed next but one to Mr. Irving, and the great pleasure of sharing in his conversation. He had brought the manuscript of his speech, and laid it under his plate. 'I shall certainly break down,' he repeated over and over again. At last the moment arrived. Mr Irving rose, and was received with deafening and long-continued applause, which by no means lessened his apprehension. He began in his pleasant voice, got through two or three sentences pretty easily, but in the next hesitated, and, after

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one or two attempts to go on, gave it up, with a graceful allusion to the tournament, and the troops of knights all armed and eager for the fray; and ended with the toast, 'Charles Dickens, the guest of the nation.' 'There,' said he as he resumed his seat, under a repetition of the applause that had saluted his rising, — 'there! I told you I should break down, and I've done it!'"[1]

Irving chose for his diplomatic household Alexander Hamilton, jun., as secretary of legation; and Hector Ames, and J. C. Brevoort, son of his life-long friend, as *attachés*. After making suitable arrangements for the management of his affairs at home, he embarked for Liverpool on the 10th of April, followed by the prayers and good wishes of his countrymen.

[1] Life and Letters, vol. iii. pp. 184, 185.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE SPANISH MISSION.

1842-1846.

HAVING arrived in London on the 1st of May, Irving soon found himself surrounded by old friends distinguished in the world of literature and politics. Among them were Sir Robert Peel, Lord Aberdeen, Rogers, and Moore. Rogers was especially touched by the meeting. The aged poet embraced Irving with paternal affection, and was rejoiced to see him once more. Moore, full of troubles from want of means and the wildness of his son, welcomed him with the old fondness. At a literary dinner Irving was heartily cheered, and again called upon to pass through the horrors of speech-making. His embarrassment at the Dickens dinner haunted him painfully; and, had it not been for Moore's persuasion, this would probably have prevented his attendance. He was ill at ease during the entire banquet, and felt that he could never attend another in which he was personally conspicuous.

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In describing his presentation to the young queen, Victoria, whose coronation had taken place five years before, he has left us a fresh picture of that amiable sovereign: —

"She is certainly quite low in stature," he says, "but well formed and well rounded. Her countenance, though not decidedly handsome, is agreeable and intelligent; her eyes light blue, with light eyelashes; and her mouth generally a little open, so that you can see her teeth. She acquits herself in her receptions with great grace, and even with dignity. Prince Albert stood beside her, — a tall, elegantly formed young man, with a handsome, prepossessing countenance. He is said to be frank, manly, intelligent, and accomplished; to be fond of his little wife, who, in turn, is strongly attached to him. It is rare to see such a union of pure affection on a throne." At a royal ball, at which two thousand guests were present, he again saw the queen, and conversed with Prince Albert. "The personage who appeared least to enjoy the scene," he says, "seemed to me to be the little queen herself. She was flushed and heated, and evidently fatigued and oppressed with the state she had to keep up, and the regal robes in which she was arrayed, and especially by a crown of gold, which weighed heavily on her brow, and to which she was continually raising her hand to move it slightly when it pressed."

After visiting his sister at Birmingham, Irving proceeded to Paris. The gay city that had so fascinated him in his youth had few charms for him now. The pageants and turmoils of life were ceasing to arouse his interest, and were often positively tedious to him. It was only through

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philosophy that he could resign himself to the "splendor of courts and the conversation of courtiers;" and he already began to long for the time when he might "return to sweet little Sunnyside, and be able to sit on a stone fence, and talk about politics and rural affairs with Neighbor Forkel and Uncle Brom."

Accordingly, after a short stay in France, during which he visited Louis Philippe, whose coronation he had witnessed in 1830, he gathered his diplomatic household about him, and set out for Madrid. The legation reached Madrid July 25, and took up their residence in the house of the retiring minister, Mr. Vail. The building was the hotel of the Duke of San Lorenzo. In one wing were the apartments of the American mission: in the other were those of the Brazilian minister, Mr. Albuquerque, whose wife was an American lady. The location was desirable, being near the royal palace and the royal library. The rooms occupied by Irving faced a public square where the varied life of the city was constantly visible; and, as he sat on his balcony in the evening, he daily saw the little queen and her governess returning from their evening ride.

His presentation to the queen is described with graphic detail in one of his letters. Having received an appointment from the minister of foreign affairs to meet the regent Espartero on a

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certain day, he proceeded in company with Mr. Vail, and his secretary of legation, Mr. Hamilton, to the regent's palace. Passing by numbers of armed sentinels who were stationed in various parts of the palace, they were ushered into a spacious anteroom adorned with busts of Espartero and a picture of him in a battle-scene. After waiting a little while in this room, which was occupied at the time by some of the regent's aides and officers, they were led into an inner saloon, where Espartero, and his minister of state, Count Almodovar, were stationed, awaiting their entrance. The regent impressed Irving as "a fine, manly, soldier-like fellow, with a frank deportment, a face full of resolution and intelligence, and a bright, beaming black eye." Advancing, Irving read a short address in Spanish, stating that he had the honor of delivering to the regent the letter of the President to the Queen, expressing the respect and good-will of the American Government for the sovereign, institutions, and people of Spain. He declared the desire of his country to draw still closer the bonds of amity that united the two nations, and expressed a wish that Spain might enjoy prosperity under the recently inaugurated constitutional government; concluding with a reference to his own gratification at being intrusted with a mission, which, he hoped, would cultivate a friendly feeling between the

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countries. The regent replied in a "manly, frank, cordial, and courteous manner," closing with some complimentary expressions to the newly-appointed minister. After introducing his secretary, and waiting for Mr. Vail's farewell to the regent, Irving and his companions retired to the anteroom.

Proceeding to the royal palace, they prepared to pay their respects to the queen. After waiting some time in the apartment of the secretary of state, it was announced that the queen was prepared to receive them. As they traversed the vast courts, and suites of apartments, they were struck with the grand loneliness that pervaded the ancient palace, once the scene of a gay and happy court. A dim twilight added gloom to the surroundings; for the halls were darkened to keep out the heat. The walls and portals still bore the marks of violence inflicted on them, when, only a few months before, a midnight attack was made on the palace to obtain possession of the little queen. After passing up the magnificent staircases, through the solemn halls, and under the shattered marble casements of the unoccupied parts of the palace, they paused in "a great saloon with high vaulted ceiling incrusted with florid devices in porcelain, and hung with silken tapestries, but all in dim twilight like the rest of the palace." A door opened at the other end of the saloon, dis-

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closing an almost interminable vista of apartments, out of which noiselessly glided some figures in black. They advanced a little distance into the saloon, the smaller taking her station before the others, and paused. The fragile little figure in black was the young queen, Isabella II. Her companions were her governess, Madame Mina, and her guardian, Arguelles. The minister of state presented Irving; and the little queen gave him a "grave and quiet welcome, expressed in a very low voice." Irving's heart was touched when he took leave of this child of only twelve years, surrounded by all the forms and ceremonies of state, and shut up within the sepulchral walls of the dismal old palace. It seems to have given him great satisfaction, however, to know that her governess and guardian were tender and kind in their treatment of their little charge. Irving realized "what important concerns depended upon the life of this fragile little being, and to what a stormy and precarious career she might be destined;" but even his sympathetic imagination pictured no severer trials than those through which she was fated to pass.

Irving remained only a few weeks in the hotel of the Duke of San Lorenzo, which he found noisy and inconvenient. His new quarters were in the house of a bachelor nobleman. The building was so large, he said, that it gave him an appe-

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tite to walk from his study to the dining-room! His private apartment looked out upon a garden filled with antique relics, and commanded a view of the regent's palace. Here he hoped to adjust himself to literary labors, as the social demands upon him did not promise to be absorbing. There was little rivalry in display among the diplomatic corps. The British minister, whose private fortune placed him beyond all hope of competition, was the only one who gave grand banquets. Irving confined himself to small companies, such as could surround "a social round-table." This modesty of entertainment was the more natural, as there was no lady in his diplomatic family. The outside claims upon his attention were not pressing. Prince Dolgorouki, his old friend of the Russian legation, was at this time minister at Naples. Mr. D'Oubril, formerly minister at Madrid, in whose family Irving had been a frequent guest, was then minister at Frankfort. Even his old literary friend, the historian Navarrete, was absent from Madrid. In a measure shut off from congenial intimacies, Irving found little to attract him into general society. Thus filled with "half-melancholy recollections" as he retraced the scenes of past pleasures and friendships, and found them "vacant and desolate," he hoped to bury himself in the manuscripts of his "Life of Washington."

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Though the mission was not graced by the presence of a lady, its own private social life was by no means dull. The secretary and the young *attachés* were full of good spirits, and afforded much enjoyment to Irving by their genial companionship. The three young men made a tour through Andalusia, and returned with a fund of news and anecdotes that recalled the early visits of Irving to Granada and Seville. At the Alhambra Irving was still kindly remembered, and his old servants were using his name to assure the public that they were competent guides to the attractions of the ancient palace. We may note here that Irving's visit furnished the descendants of his servant, Mateo Jimenez, with a permanent occupation. Some years afterwards a traveller was furnished with the following card: —

GRANADA. — José Jimenez (son of Mateo Jimenez, guide to Washington Irving), a native of the Alhambra, respectfully offers his services to accompany strangers, travellers, and visitors to the palace of the Alhambra and the environs of the above-named capital, for which his intimate acquaintance with the antiquities and beauties which distinguish Granada eminently qualify him."

Irving's hope of engaging in literary labor was doomed to disappointment from many causes. Among the occurrences that disturbed him was a new attack in the newspapers. The editor of "Graham's Magazine," the Rev. Rufus W. Gris-

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wold, had accused Sir Walter Scott of puffing himself; and added, "Washington Irving has done the same thing in writing laudatory notices of his own works for the reviews, and, like Scott, received pay for whitewashing himself." The reference was to an article in "The Quarterly Review," which, we have already seen, was written at Murray's request, to show how far "The Conquest of Granada" was fictitious, and contained no laudatory expressions. Another charge had been made in 1841, in "The Southern Literary Messenger," that Irving had made insufficient acknowledgment of his obligation to Navarrete in his "Life of Columbus." As Irving was advised not to reply to the accusation, it was again revived during his residence in Spain, with the implication that it was unanswered because it was unanswerable. That Irving drew his facts largely from Navarrete's work is undeniable; but his charming style gave the materials a new value, that set at defiance neither the laws nor the ethics of copyright. His perfect vindication from these charges may be found in his "Life and Letters."[1]

Irving found another source of interruption in the insurrectionary movements that were at this time agitating the unhappy country. Only a few months after his arrival a rebellion broke out in Barcelona, that threatened to draw into revolt

[1] Vol. iii. pp. 267–273.

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every portion of the country, and overturn the government of the regent. Irving saw Espartero take his departure to quell the insurrection, and expressed the warmest admiration for the personal and military qualities of this great man. The political difficulties of the nation required Irving's closest attention, and much of his time was occupied in preparing those long and frequent despatches to the Department of State for which Daniel Webster said he laid aside all other official correspondence.

Near the beginning of 1843 Irving was confined to his house by illness that did not wholly leave him for many months. He had begun his labors on his "Life of Washington" amid his diplomatic engagements, and his malady was the result of overwork. His physician ordered a discontinuance of all writing, though this did not prevent his indulging in a somewhat extended correspondence. His letters during the summer of this year contain a full account of the revolution that expelled the regent, and changed the entire government.

In June he found himself surrounded with plots and insurrections that absorbed his interest to the exclusion of every thing else. His young friends Brevoort and Ames were no longer with him, and his secretary was on a journey to the north of Spain. Alone in his spacious mansion, at the age of sixty, in broken health, he beheld Madrid in a

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state of siege. The troops of the government were marching through the streets; the shops were closed by day, and the whole city was illuminated at night; the opposition papers were suspended, and the government journals preferred the policy of silence; the regent was in a distant part of the kingdom, and the forces of the insurgents were thundering at the gates of the capital. In the midst of all this excitement and alarm Irving was cool and tranquil, and mustered strength enough to ride in his carriage through the streets, deserted except by the soldiers, who were bivouacking in the squares and on the pavements.

His window commanded a view of one of the city-gates; and he could hear every discharge of the enemy, and see every flash of the guns at night. Notwithstanding this, he could not remain in his apartments, but traversed all parts of the city to witness the preparations for defence.

His solicitude for the young queen and her sister led him to prepare a note in behalf of the diplomatic corps, offering the protection of their presence in the royal palace; fearing lest the maddened insurgents, if they gained an entrance into the city, might storm the royal chamber, and destroy the lives of the little queen and her sister the princess. The other diplomatists modified Irving's proposition; but the note finally sent incorporated his suggestion. The ministry of the city declined

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the offer, however; believing themselves able to protect the inmates of the palace. Their plan was to make this the last point of defence, and to struggle desperately for the safety of the royal occupants.

Early in August, the revolution ended in the defeat of Espartero and the overthrow of his regency. Soon afterwards Irving was present at a grand ceremonial in the royal palace, then thronged again with the gay courtiers of the aristocracy, who had abandoned it during the rule of the regent. The victorious party proposed to make the little queen their sovereign before her legal majority, which was not until her fourteenth birthday. With all the pomp and splendor of a Spanish court the little queen received the homage and allegiance of the nation in the same halls that seemed so dismal and lonely to Irving at his first interview, but on this occasion transformed into a scene of unsurpassed magnificence. The palace and the public squares resounded with acclamations of "Long live the queen!" In the evening of this gala-day, the insurgent troops, now loyal to the government of the hour, passed beneath the balcony, where their young queen smiled upon them as radiant as their own summer sky. All this mingled with Irving's reflections on the "hocus-pocus of political affairs."

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The change in the government was not pleasing to Irving, and his sympathies followed the gallant and patriotic Espartero into his exile in France. His wife, the Duchess of Victoria, a lady whose excellence Irving much admired, found refuge in the house of a relative, where Irving visited her soon after her husband's overthrow. His admiration increased as he witnessed her resignation and fortitude in adversity. She had no word of reproach for her husband's enemies, but felt sad that some who had risen through his friendship had first betrayed him. Her noble spirit drew consolation from the fact that she and her husband left the regency poorer than they entered it.

Increased discomfiture from his malady induced Irving to seek relief in an excursion to France. Leaving Madrid in September, Mr. Hamilton acting as *chargé d'affaires* in his absence, he spent some time with his relatives at Versailles, where his niece, Mrs. Storrow, was living. His journey failed to restore his health; though, while in France, he secured the best medical treatment. He returned to his post in December, somewhat disheartened at his condition, which disabled him for literary labor, and interfered with his social enjoyments. His loneliness, illness, and inability to use his pen, combined to create a longing for his quiet little cottage on the Hudson, where he could

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find that repose and domestic peace that are so much needed to solace the declining years of life.

Soon after his return to Madrid, Irving saw a sad illustration of Spanish inconstancy in a quarrel between the little queen and her minister of state, Mr. Olozaga. She accused him of arrogance, and contempt of her rights, in forcing her to sign a decree dissolving the Cortes. He, in response, retaliated with a charge of prevarication. The nation was divided into parties, who respectively upheld the sovereign and the minister; and she, who but a few months before had been crowned amid the acclamations of her people, was denounced by a large and powerful faction as guilty of the basest falsehood. Irving could not refrain from pity as he beheld this immature girl surrounded by flatterers and intriguers, who were entangling her in a web of partisan counsels.

Among the grand ceremonies which he was permitted to witness was the reception of the queen-mother, Maria Christina, wife of the former king, Ferdinand VII., after her long banishment from the country. She had dishonored herself by a guilty union with a military adventurer named Muñoz, and, having forfeited her claims to the regency, had been suspected of complicity in the night attack on the palace to gain possession of her children, whence she found it expedient to flee from the country. During the regency of Espar-

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tero she had remained in Paris, where, by her vast wealth, she was enabled to live in royal magnificence. As her party was now in power, she was received with splendid ceremonies, and once more became the central object of attraction in a dazzling court. The levees held in her honor were brilliant and stately beyond any thing that Madrid had known during her absence, and Irving's high position in the diplomatic corps afforded him an opportunity to witness all the splendors of which Spanish monarchs have usually been so fond. Though he had seen much of royalty, he said of the queen-mother, "I think, for queenly grace and dignity, mingled with the most gracious affability, she surpasses any sovereign I have ever seen."

During his indisposition, which affected his habits by keeping him confined to the house except when he drove out in his carriage, Irving retained his gentleness of temper and his playful good-humor. His letters contain no complaints, but are full of that sportive gayety that illness is so liable to spoil. For his sisters and nieces he has graphic descriptions of the court-toilets, mingled with playful comparisons of the gilded life of royalty and the rural life of Sunnyside, in which he seldom fails to leave the impression that the life of a court is hollow beside the joys of a cottage. For his old friends he has the same frank, open,

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kindly words as he had in the days when the pageants of the world had charms for him. He jests about his infirmities as if they were not his daily afflictions, and thus his very pains are made the occasion of pleasure to others. The sly fun of the youth is only the merrier in the man of threescore. "Give my regards to General Morris," he says in reply to a request for permission to reprint a story from "The Sketch-Book," "and tell him he is quite welcome to my 'Wife;' which is more than most of his friends could say."

In the spring of 1844 his malady had been so far cured that he began to be able to walk out, and enjoy that communion with nature that was ever to him a principal source of delight. This liberation from confinement was the more appreciated as it came about the time that his secretary, Mr. Hamilton, returned to the United States. Irving was fondly attached to this young man. The day after his departure he wrote from his lonely mansion, "I feel my heart choking me as I walk about and miss Hamilton from the places and seats he used to occupy." Even the servants felt the gloom that had fallen upon the house and its master. In less than a month, however, Mr. Hamilton's place was filled by Mr. Jasper Livingston, — a son of Judge Livingston, one of Irving's preceptors in law.

Late in June, 1844, Irving received letters of

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state from his government to the queen, — one congratulating her on her accession to the throne, the other condoling with her on the death of her uncle. As the court was held at Barcelona during the summer, Irving proceeded thither to discharge his trust. He found the city crowded, and was compelled to take rather narrow quarters, until a friend found him out, and gave him sumptuous apartments in his own house. He had an interview with the queen, and afterward with the queen-mother, in the palace of the Count de Espagne, who had been his host when he was on his way from the Alhambra to England as secretary of legation, but who had been murdered when a prisoner in the mountains during the civil war. Irving describes the city as "one of the favored spots of the earth, surrounded by a rich and fruitful country, magnificent prospects of land and sea, and blessed with a sweetly-tempered southern climate."

After a month's residence in Barcelona, having received leave of absence, Irving made a third visit to France, landing at Marseilles, and proceeding up the Rhone. After a brief visit to England he returned to France, and had a private interview with Louis Philippe at St. Cloud. The visit was made in plain dress, and Irving had an opportunity of seeing royalty at home. The royal family were together in a private apartment: the ladies

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were engaged in needlework, and the tea-service was on the table, as in an ordinary home. The king conversed freely with Irving, relating with much enthusiasm and humor his adventures in America, and expressing the wish that the ocean were not so wide, that he might cross it more conveniently.

On his return to Madrid in November Irving found the court more gay and magnificent than ever before, and beheld the head of the government, General Narvaez, at the height of his power; though it was only a few months after that he quarrelled with the queen, and was driven into banishment, powerless and disgraced. Amid all the gayeties of the following winter (1845) Irving was a spectator rather than a participant in the ceremonies of the court. A breakfast alone, an hour with the newspapers, a drive in the Prado, a dinner with his secretary and generally a few guests, a quiet evening at the opera, — these were the routine of his daily life. He seems to have enjoyed some literary occupations at this time, as his health was quite fully restored; but his chief pleasure consisted in musing upon the scenes and events of earlier days. Some extracts from his letters dated in the spring of this year will serve to portray the condition of his mind: —

"My life has been a checkered one, crowded with incidents and personages, and full of shifting scenes and sudden

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transitions. All these I can summon up, and cause to pass before me, and in this way can pass hours together in a kind of revery. When I was young, my imagination was always in the advance, picturing out the future, and building castles in the air: now memory comes in the place of imagination, and I look back over the region I have travelled. Thank God, the same plastic feeling which used to deck all the future with the hues of fairy-land throws a soft coloring on the past, until the very roughest places, through which I struggled with many a heartache, lose all their asperity in the distance. . . .

"This is my sixty-second birthday. I recollect the time when I did not wish to live to such an age, thinking it must be attended with infirmities, apathy of feeling, peevishness of temper, and all the other ills which conspire to 'render age unlovely;' yet here my sixty-second birthday finds me in fine health, in the full enjoyment of all my faculties, with my sensibilities still fresh, and in such buxom activity, that, on my return home yesterday from the Prado, I caught myself bounding up stairs three steps at a time, to the astonishment of the porter, and checked myself, recollecting that it was not the pace befitting a minister and a man of my years. If I conld only retain such health and good spirits, I should be content to live on till the age of Methuselah."[1]

In September he disposed of his establishment to Mr. Albuquerque, the Brazilian minister, with the intention of resigning his position. Once more he visited Paris and London, remaining in England much longer than he had intended, in order to assist the minister at that court, his old

[1] Life and Letters, vol. iii. pp. 374, 375.

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friend Mr. McLane, in adjusting the Oregon dispute. He became much interested in this question, and warmly maintained the right of his country to the whole of Oregon. "Bulwer," he once said to Lord Lytton, then the English minister at Madrid, "I should deplore exceedingly a war with England; for, depend upon it, if we must come to blows, it will be serious work for both. You might break our head at first; but, by Heaven! we would break your back in the end."

Having returned to Madrid in March, 1846, he awaited the appointment of his successor, who he had hoped would be appointed in February. The resignation had been forwarded in December of the preceding year; but the new minister, General Romulus M. Saunders of North Carolina, did not reach Madrid until the end of July. After an interview with the queen, Irving hastened home early in August, without paying a farewell visit to his friends and relatives in Europe. He hoped to return once more for that purpose; but he was never more to recross the Atlantic. He reached home about the middle of September, 1846, after an absence of nearly four years and a half.

The impression made by Irving in his official capacity was both favorable and lasting. Mr. Bryant visited Madrid in 1857; and a distinguished Spaniard said to him, "Why does not your government send out Washington Irving to this court?

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Why do you not take as your agent the man whom all Spain admires, venerates, loves? I assure you it would be difficult for our government to refuse any thing which Irving should ask, and his signature would make almost any treaty acceptable to our people."

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CHAPTER IX.

AT SUNNYSIDE.

1846-1859.

A WARM welcome greeted its owner on his return to the "dear little cottage at Sunnyside." Having laid aside the robes of the diplomatist, he was soon playing the *rôle* of the architect and the landscape-gardener, extending and beautifying his nookery. The transformation was so complete, that the minister plenipotentiary had become in a few months a quiet country gentleman, with more interest in fruit-trees and saddle-horses than in the affairs of state.

The peace and leisure of his rural retreat invited once more to the pursuits of literature. The expense of his repairs on the cottage quickened his desire to earn something by his pen. His investments, which had been skilfully managed during his absence by his nephew Pierre M. Irving, furnished him with a moderate income; but his literary property had not been for some time a source

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of revenue. His lease of his copyrights had expired, and had not been renewed; and some of his books were out of print. Overtures were made by several publishers for the publication of a complete edition of his works, and he was urged to devote himself to their revision. This he began to do soon after his home was once more settled; but the work suffered many interruptions, owing to his distaste for a task of this kind. In the midst of his revision he became absorbed in the sketches that had been stored away in his trunks, the results of his researches among the old Moorish chronicles. He became so interested in retouching and rewriting these half-forgotten manuscripts, that he declared he would rather work at them for half price than engage in other labors. These were finally abandoned, however, at the solicitation of his friends, who were anxious that he should revise his previous works, and address himself to his "Life of Washington."

In July, 1848, an agreement was made with Mr. George P. Putnam of New York for the publication of the complete works. In substance, the contract gave Mr. Putnam the exclusive privilege of publishing Irving's writings in this country, for which the author was to receive twelve and a half per cent on the retail price of all the books sold. In addition, Mr. Putnam agreed to advance large sums of money in quarterly payments. The

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arrangement proved satisfactory, and largely remunerative to both author and publisher. Nearly a hundred thousand dollars was paid to Irving by Mr. Putnam during the ten years previous to Irving's death. The descendants of Mr. Putnam have continued to offer uniform editions of Irving's works in every desirable form, from the cheap popular sixteenmo to the elegant and costly quarto.

In the autumn of 1848, in his sixty-fifth year, Irving united with the Episcopal Church, in which he continued until his death. Though he had never limited his faith by the boundaries of a creed, the religious emotion was natural to his heart. In spite of all that a somewhat unusual contact with the world had done to render him sceptical of human professions, he was a devout believer in the essentials of revealed religion. His soul was receptiye to every touch of divinity in the natural world, and he felt within himself the movements of a more than mortal being. He saw one day, as he was passing a German shop in Broadway, an engraving that arrested his attention. As he paused to gaze at it, the tears gathered in his eyes before he could control his emotions. The picture was Scheffer's "Christus Consolator," engraved by Dupont. He ordered it to be sent to Sunnyside; and, when he had unpacked it there, the tears again gushed from his

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eyes as he looked upon the countenance of the Saviour. "Nothing," he said, "is superior to it in the world of art."

Irving's pastor, the Rev. Dr. Creighton, in a memorial discourse has given some glimpses of his religious life, which assure us of the reality of his professions: —

"One sabbath morning he approached me," says Dr. Creighton, "and asked why we could not have the 'Gloria in Excelsis' sung every Sunday. I replied that I had no objection, and that there was nothing whatever to prevent it; and at the same time inquired of him, 'Do you like it?' — 'Like it! like it!' said he, — 'above all things. Why, it contains the sum and substance of our faith; and I never hear it without feeling better, and without my heart being lifted up.' . . . .

"You all know how regular and punctual was his attendance on this church, — so regular, indeed, that, when not seen, it was at once understood that he was either absent from home, or detained by indisposition. Nor was he satisfied in giving his bodily presence merely. This was not all that he desired. But the part which he bore in the responses showed that he came not only in compliance with custom, but to fulfil a sacred duty in offering up his humble prayers at the footstool of mercy. . . .

"Charity was with him not a duty, but an instinct. Every discourse from the pulpit, or from any other place, which set forth these things as the bond of peace, was certain to meet the approval of the deceased. Every measure for the amelioration of the condition of the poor and afflicted was sure to meet his approbation. The relief of the poor and the needy, the improvement of schools, of

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chapels, and churches, were always of the deepest interest to him. His advice and his experience were always readily given whenever required, and his contributions from his purse were always of the most liberal kind. Of the extent of his private charities no man shall know until the day when the Saviour shall declare, 'Inasmuch as ye did it to one of these little ones, ye did it unto me.'"

During the latter part of 1848, and the whole of 1849, Irving was much from home, either consulting books in the libraries of the city, or occupied with the settlement of Mr. Astor's estate, of which he was an executor. For his services in executing the will, he received, as his share of the commissions, more than ten thousand dollars. The public are indebted to Irving for his exertions in suggesting and organizing the great library that bears Mr. Astor's name.

While in Paris in 1824, Irving had prepared a sketch of the life of Oliver Goldsmith, as an introduction to that author's works in a collection of British classics. During his residence in America he had expanded this sketch by incorporating the results of Prior's researches into a small volume for Harper's Family Library. About this time Forster's large Life of Goldsmith, containing much new material, was received from England. The origin of the charming biography of Goldsmith that is now printed among Irving's complete works is related in the following account from the pen of Mr. Putnam, his publisher:—

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"Sitting at my desk one day, he was looking at Forster's clever work, which I proposed to reprint. He remarked that it was a favorite theme of his, and he had half a mind to pursue it, and extend into a volume a sketch he had once made for an edition of Goldsmith's works. I expressed a hope that he would do so, and within sixty days the first sheets of Irving's 'Goldsmith' were in the printer's hands. The press (as he says) was 'dogging at his heels;' for in two or three weeks the volume was published."[1]

The book met with a remarkable sale. Mr. George Ripley at once called it "one of the most fascinating pieces of biography in the English language." It has ever since been regarded as a classic in biographical literature. In reply to a question, whether he had introduced materials which were not to be found in Prior's or Forster's books, he said playfully, "No: I could not invent any new ones; but I have altered the setting, and have introduced — not in their biography — Madame D'Arblay's anecdote about Boswell and Johnson, which is capital. I have also made more of the Jessamy Bride by adverting to the dates in the tailor's bill, and fixing thereby the dates of certain visits to her." Irving seemed to realize that his originality could not be questioned, except in jest. No one knew better than he that his claim to public favor lay not in the industry of the lumberman, but in the skill of the architect. To adopt Mr. Ripley's appropriate metaphor, "he had only

[1] Atlantic Monthly, November, 1860.

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to insert his exquisite magnetic needle into the mass to give a choice and shapely form to all that was valuable in the labors of previous biographers." When he heard that he had been called "a self-acknowledged imitator" of Goldsmith, because of the lines,

> "Thou art my master, and my teacher thou:
> It was from thee, and thee alone, I took
> That noble style for which men honor me,"—

which he quotes from Dante in closing his preface, —he declared that he had never consciously imitated any one, and that his style was as much his own as his voice.

While on his first visit to Spain, he had projected a series of works illustrating the domination of the Arabs in that country. The first of these was to be a life of the Prophet of Islam, to be followed by sketches of his successors. In 1831 he had retouched and expanded his short Life of Mahomet for Murray's Family Library; but, circumstances interfering with its completion, it was again thrown aside. While minister to Spain he had read a German work on the subject, which revived his interest by the extent and minuteness of its author's researches. Using the materials thus furnished, he again revised his manuscript, and again laid it away. On his return to America he once more recast the work, which was published in two

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volumes, under the title of "Mahomet and his Successors." Though the work makes no pretension to original research, and claims attention only as a popular life of the Prophet, it has retained an honored place in the now extensive literature on this subject. In speaking of Irving's fitness for the task, "The North-American Review" says, —

"Mr. Irving possesses the rare power — fruit of genial sympathy and most honest intent — of throwing his own mind into the mind he steadfastly contemplates, so as to see with its eyes, understand with its understanding, and feel with its passions; not as the ghoul inhabits a forsaken form, making the vehicle hideous to those who loved it best in its true being, but rather as some friendly angel might for a time re-animate the earthly tenement of one departed for the sake of explaining what had been unlovely in its past seeming, or of laying open the unsuspected or overlooked sources of its errors. Some lack of potential passion in his own nature is, perhaps, rather an advantage than the contrary, when he assumes the position of an observer and faithful reporter; for, if we miss the imposing strength imparted by partisan bias or sectarian malignity, we are also protected from the prejudices which are so apt to cloud the vision of those who look at men and events with the mental eye ever so little inflamed."[1]

The next two years after the publication of "Mahomet" (1850, 1851) slipped away without leaving any literary results, except some additional chapters of the "Life of Washington." The author feared that he would never finish this "crowning

[1] October, 1850, p. 274.

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work" of his life, but said solemnly, "If I could only live to finish it, I would be willing to die the next moment." With this strong desire bearing him forward, he toiled on it lovingly, yet intermittently, as was his habit in writing. Among his favorite diversions was an occasional trip to the city to attend the opera, of which he was passionately fond. Music became sweeter to his ears as he grew older, and there was nothing that gave the old man more delight than to suffer his soul to be lapped in the melody of impassioned song. He anticipated little pleasure, however, from the "passionless performances" of Jenny Lind as a mere singer at a concert; yet, after hearing her once, he enrolled himself among her admirers.

The death of James Fenimore Cooper the novelist, in the autumn of 1851, drew Irving's thoughts to the short remainder of life that he could reasonably expect for himself. He was already established in literature when Cooper began his career; and he had watched with interest the development of a writer, who, at the time of his death, divided with himself the prestige of being America's greatest author. In his memorial address on Cooper, Bryant referred to an "unhappy coolness" between him and Irving. In a conversation with his nephew, Irving afterward remarked that "he had never been conscious of any cause of difference between them." In his

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reply to an invitation to be present at the memorial services, he says, "The death of Fenimore Cooper, though anticipated, is an event of deep and public concern, and calls for the highest expression of public sensibility. To me it comes with something of a shock; for it seems but the other day that I saw him at our common literary resort at Putnam's in full vigor of mind and body, a very 'castle of a man,' and apparently destined to outlive me, who am several years his senior. He has left a space in our literature which will not easily be supplied." [1] The apprehension of his own departure must have been strengthened by the fact that his friend Thomas Moore died on the very day of Cooper's commemoration. Irving had expressed himself as content to die, if he could only have "the cheerful exercise of intellect to the last." The fate of Scott had always saddened him, and the failure of Moore's mind at the end of his career doubtless troubled him.

Though in his sixty-ninth year, Irving retained the vigor and vivacity of a boy. In the summer of 1852 he made a visit to Saratoga, where he found his "mental faculties refreshed, invigorated, and brightened up." Indeed, age seemed to have no effect upon him except to mellow his heart into geniality and beneficence. He delighted in the

[1] Memorial of Cooper, p. 7.

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society of women, and was simple and affectionate in the treatment of children. An incident illustrating his interest in little people, and his sympathy with them in their little troubles, is thus related by Charles Augustus Davis, an "old crony" who was with him at Saratoga: —

"In one of our rambles, I recollect his attention was arrested by the crying and sobbing of a poor little barefooted and ragged boy, wearing an old 'cone-shaped' hat that had lost its original form. He had just been punished by an elder sister, a thin, slatternly young vixen, who was following him. Mr. Irving, at once reading the whole story, turned aside from our route, and commenced, in a most friendly and affectionate tone, with, 'I know what is the matter with my little boy. It is enough to make anybody cry to wear a hat that falls down over his eyes so he can't see, and stubbing his little toes. I see the cause of all this trouble.' And with that he took off the old hat, and, rolling its flabby brim inward, replaced it on the little boy's head. 'There,' said he, 'that is all right now.' Both the children, confounded by the event, stood for a time silent, and then moved off, chuckling together at its oddity; while Mr. Irving, resuming his walk, seemed not less gratified at his success in turning a scene of grief into one of gladness." [1]

Early in 1853 Irving undertook a journey to Washington in order to examine the archives of state in collecting materials for his great biography. On his way he could not resist the old passion for the opera, and stopped in New York

[1] Life and Letters, vol. iv. pp. 114, 115.

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to enjoy some of the pleasures of the season. Though not too old to attend balls, he preferred remaining in a room up-stairs to mingling in the dance, and declares in a letter to his niece, "The dances that are the fashion put me out of countenance, and are not such as a gentleman of my years ought to witness." Yet at Baltimore he found old Mr. Gray, the father-in-law of John P. Kennedy, like himself, "very fond of music and pretty faces," a coincidence of taste which linked the old men together in most cordial friendship. At Washington he was again encircled by the pleasures of fashionable society, and lionized to his own discomfiture. At the levee of President Fillmore he was almost as conspicuous as the President himself, though he shrank from this kind of publicity with a strong aversion. "I had to shake hands," he says, "with man, woman, and child, who beset me on all sides, until I felt it was becoming rather absurd, and struggled out of the throng." Having made his home with his friend John P. Kennedy, who was then Secretary of the Navy, Irving was solicited on every side to engage in the festivities of the capital. Dinners, parties, balls, and visits at length wrung from him the confession, "Playing the lion has killed me. I should like to repose for a few days in my den at Sunnyside." In these festivities he was a companion of Thackeray the novelist, then on a lecture-

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tour in this country. He became acquainted with Franklin Pierce, the president elect, and was pleased to learn that he was intending to provide for Hawthorne, for whom Irving had the highest admiration. Having paid a visit to the tomb of Washington at Mount Vernon after the inauguration of President Pierce, Irving returned to Sunnyside in March.

A passage in a letter to Mrs. Kennedy soon after his return at once gives us a glimpse of his domestic life, an example of his playful style, and an insight into his character: —

"After all the kissing and crying and laughing and rejoicing were over, I sallied forth to inspect my domains, welcomed by my prime-minister Robert, and my master of the horse Thomas, and my keeper of the poultry-yard William. Every thing was in good order: all had been faithful in the discharge of their duties. My fields had been manured, my trees trimmed, the fences repaired and painted. I really believe more had been done in my absence than would have been done had I been home. My horses were in good condition. Dandy and Billy, the coach-horses, were as sleek as seals. Gentleman Dick, my saddle-horse, showed manifest pleasure at seeing me, put his cheek against mine, laid his head on my shoulder, and would have nibbled at my ear had I permitted it. One of my Chinese geese was sitting on eggs: the rest were sailing like frigates in the pond with a whole fleet of white topknot ducks. The hens were vying with each other which could bring out the earliest brood of chickens. Taffy and Tony, two pet dogs of a dandy race, kept more for show than use, received

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me with well-bred though rather cool civility; while my little terrier-slut Ginger bounded about me almost crazy with delight, having five little Gingers toddling at her heels, with which she has enriched me during my absence."[1]

No doubt the reader would be glad to peep in at this little cottage-home on the banks of the Hudson, and see the old man himself, and hear him talk familiarly, not with diplomatic precision and reserve, but as friend speaks to friend in daily converse. Fortunately we may thus see him through the eyes of three visitors, two of them distinguished writers. The following is from the pen of Osmond Tiffany:—

"I met Mr. Irving only once; but then it was at his own fireside, with no other visitor to share my enjoyment. It was in the summer of 1853, when I had left Baltimore for the hot season, and was passing my time at White Plains, eight miles from Sunnyside. The Hon. John P. Kennedy, an intimate friend of Irving's, had given me a letter to him; and on a lovely August day I drove over to his house. . . .

"Mr. Irving was suffering a little that day with headache; and, feeling unwilling to detain him, after a pleasant call of half an hour I rose to depart. He, however, would not permit me to do so, saying that I had come from a distance, and must stay to dinner. He then added that he wished a little rest; but that if I would amuse myself with a book, or strolling about the grounds, he would leave me to myself for an hour or so. Nothing more delightful than to tread the lawn at Sunnyside. It overhung the river, the railroad passing directly under the bank, from

[1] Life and Letters, vol. iv. p. 136.

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which I looked across the Tappan Zee. . . . Miles away across the water lay Tappan, where André bravely met his melancholy doom. Above and below stretched an enchanting prospect, ever enlivened by the white-winged craft scudding before or beating in the wind. Nature and art were charmingly blended in the grounds; fine deciduous trees and evergreens contrasted foliage; while winding paths led into shady dells and arbors, or to rustic bridges which spanned a brooklet running riverward. The whole sweet scene was in unison with the genial spirit of its possessor.

"On returning to the house at four o'clock, Mr. Irving met me again in the parlor. This was a large and handsomely-furnished room, decorated with paintings and engravings, several of them scenes from the author's own writings, which had been given to him; while the book-table displayed choice presentation-copies of works from literary friends. I was attracted by a collection of Wilkie's engraved works, and particularly struck by one of its subjects, — a young monk on his knees confessing to an old one. Mr. Irving said that he himself was with Wilkie when he made the sketch of this picture. They were travelling together in Spain; and one day, in passing through the aisles of one of its old cathedrals, they peeped into a confessional, and beheld a venerable bearded ecclesiastic listening to the fervent confession of sin from a young devotee. Wilkie instantly stopped and sketched this striking scene, elaborating it on his return to England.

"Dinner being now announced, we were joined by a brother of Mr. Irving, who, with his three daughters, resides at Sunnyside. In introducing me to his nieces, he playfully spoke of them as his adopted daughters, for want of any of his own. He had now entirely recovered from headache, and was in the most lively and agreeable mood. I had heard that in general society he was often silent, and

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I knew that on public occasions he could not possibly speak; but now nothing could be more delightful than the flow of his conversation. I found that the best way to draw him out was to let him talk on at will, now and then making some slight suggestion which would open a new subject. In this manner he touched upon his travels in Spain, and recalled the palmy days of the Alhambra; and it was like reading one of his fine romances to hear him speak of bygone scenes in Granada, Madrid, and Seville. He had many anecdotes of the celebrated actors and singers of his time; for he was fond of music, and thoroughly appreciated high dramatic art. . . . Nothing could be more modest than the way in which Mr. Irving spoke of himself or of his works, never naming them unless they were alluded to. Indeed, his whole manner was in striking contrast to the flippancy of some shallow literary men, and to the 'smile superior,' the self-complacency, and consummate impudence, of some of the 'curled darlings' of the lecture-room, who annually visit the rural districts to instruct us about 'society,' and tell how New-York snobocracy ties its cravats and flirts its fans in Madison Square."[1]

Another interview with Irving, four years later than the preceding, is thus sketched by N. P. Willis: —

"Our conversation, for the half-hour that we sat in that little library, turned first upon the habits of literary labor. Mr. Irving, in reply to my inquiry (whether, like Rip Van Winkle, he had 'arrived at that happy age when a man can be idle with impunity'), said 'No;' that he had sometimes worked even fourteen hours a day, but that he usually sits in his study, occupied from breakfast till dinner (both of us

[1] Irvingiana, p. 53.

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agreeing, that in literary vegetation the 'do' is on in the morning), and that he should be sorry to have much more leisure. He thought, indeed, that he should 'die in harness.' He never had a headache; that is, his workshop never gave him any trouble: but among the changes which time has wrought, one, he said, is very decided, — the desire for travel is dead within him. The days are past when he could eat or sleep anywhere with equal pleasure, and he goes to town as seldom as possible.

"Motley's 'Dutch Republic' lay open on the table; and Irving said he had been employing a little vacation from his own labors in the reading of it. It had interested him exceedingly. 'How surprising,' he exclaimed quite energetically, 'that so young a man should jump at once, full-grown, to fame, with a big book, so well-studied and complete!' This turned the conversation upon the experiences of authorship; and he said that he was always afraid to open the first copy that reached him of a new book of his own. He sat and trembled, and remembered all the weak points where he had been embarrassed and perplexed, and where he felt he might have done better, — hating to think of the book, indeed, until the reviewers had praised it. Indifference to praise or censure, he thought, was not reasonable or natural; at least, it was impossible to *him*. He remembered how he had suffered from the opinion of a Philadelphia critic, who, in reviewing 'The Sketch-Book' at its first appearance, said that 'Rip Van Winkle' was a silly attempt at humor, quite unworthy of the author's genius.

"My mention of Rogers the poet, and some other friends of Mr. Irving's who had asked me about him in England, opened a vein of his London recollections. He was never more astonished, he said, than at the success of 'The Sketch-Book;' his writing of those stories was so unlike an inspiration, so entirely without any feeling of confidence which

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could be prophetic of their popularity. Walking with his brother, one dull, foggy Sunday, over Westminster Bridge, he got to telling the old Dutch stories which he had heard at Tarrytown in his youth; when the thought suddenly struck him, 'I have it! I'll go home and make memoranda of these for a book.' And, leaving his brother to go to church, he went back to his lodgings, and jotted down all the data; and the next day — the dullest and darkest of London fogs — he sat in his little room, and wrote out 'Sleepy Hollow' by the light of a candle."[1]

With one more glimpse of the interior of Sunnyside we must close our long quotations. The following is from "Half an Hour at Sunnyside," by Theodore Tilton, written in 1859: —

"Mr. Irving is not so old-looking as one would expect who knew his age. I fancied him as in the winter of life: I found him only in its Indian summer. He came down stairs, and walked through the hall into the back-parlor, with a firm and lively step that might well have made one doubt whether he had truly attained his seventy-seventh year. He was suffering from asthma, and was muffled against the damp air with a Scotch shawl, wrapped like a great loose scarf around his neck; but as he took his seat in the old arm-chair, and, despite his hoarseness and troubled chest, began an unexpectedly vivacious conversation, he made me almost forget that I was the guest of an old man long past his 'threescore years and ten.'

"But what should one talk about who had only half an hour with Washington Irving? I ventured the question, 'Now that you have laid aside your pen, which of your books do you look back upon with most pleasure?'

[1] Home Journal, Nov. 19, 1859.

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"He immediately replied, 'I scarcely look with full satisfaction upon any; for they do not seem what they might have been. I often wish that I could have twenty years more, to take them down from the shelf, one by one, and write them over.'

"He spoke of his daily habits of writing before he had made the resolution to write no more. His usual hours for literary work were from morning till noon. But, although he had generally found his mind most vigorous in the early part of the day, he had always been subject to moods and caprices, and could never tell, when he took up the pen, how many hours would pass before he would lay it down.

"'But,' said he, 'these capricious periods of the heat and glow of composition have been the happiest hours of my life. I have never found, in any thing outside of the four walls of my study, any enjoyment equal to sitting at my writing-desk with a clean page, a new theme, and a mind awake.'

"His literary employments, he remarked, had always been more like entertainments than tasks.

"'Some writers,' said he, 'appear to have been independent of moods. Sir Walter Scott, for instance, had great power of writing, and could work almost at any time; so could Crabbe, but with this difference: Scott always, and Crabbe seldom, wrote well. I remember,' said he, 'taking breakfast one morning with Rogers, Moore, and Crabbe. The conversation turned on Lord Byron's poetic moods. Crabbe said, that, however it might be with Lord Byron, as for himself he could write as well at one time as at another. But,' said Irving, with a twinkle of humor at recalling the incident, 'Crabbe has written a great deal that nobody can read.'

"He mentioned, that, while living in Paris, he went a long period without being able to write. 'I sat down repeatedly,'

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said he, 'with pen and ink, but could invent nothing worth putting on the paper. At length I told my friend Tom Moore, who dropped in one morning, that now, after long waiting, I had the mood, and would hold it, and work it out as long as it would last, until I had wrung my brain dry. So I began to write shortly after breakfast, and continued, without noticing how the time was passing, until Moore came in again at four in the afternoon, when I had completely covered the table with freshly-written sheets. I kept the mood almost without interruption for six weeks.'

"I asked which of his books was the result of this frenzy. He replied, '"Bracebridge Hall."'

"'None of your works,' I remarked, 'are more charming than "The Biography of Goldsmith."'

"'Yet that was written,' said he, 'even more rapidly than the other.' He then added, —

"'When I have been engaged on a continuous work, I have often been obliged to rise in the middle of the night, light my lamp, and write an hour or two to relieve my mind; and, now that I write no more, I am sometimes compelled to get up in the same way to read. . . .

"'When I was in Spain,' he remarked, 'searching the old chronicles, and engaged on "The Life of Columbus," I often wrote fourteen or fifteen hours out of the twenty-four.'

"He said, that, whenever he had forced his mind to work unwillingly, the product was worthless, and he invariably threw it away, and began again; 'for,' as he observed, 'an essay or chapter that has been only hammered out is seldom good for any thing. An author's right time to work is when his mind is aglow, when his imagination is kindled: these are his precious moments. Let him wait until they come; but, when they come, let him make the most of them.'

. . . . . .

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"The author's study — into which I looked for a few moments before leaving — is a small room, almost entirely filled by the great writing-table and the lounge behind it. The walls are laden with books and pictures, which evidently are re-arranged every day by some delicate hand; for none of the books were tumbled into a corner, and no papers were lying loose upon the table. The pen, too, was laid precisely parallel to the edge of the inkstand, — a nicety which only a womanly housekeeper would persevere to maintain. Besides, there was not a speck of dust upon carpet or cushion.

. . . . . .

"As I came away, the old gentleman bundled his shawl about him, and stood a few moments on the steps. A momentary burst of sunshine fell on him through the breaking clouds. In that full light he looked less like an old man than in the dark parlor by the shaded window. His form was slightly bent; but the quiet humor of the early portraits was still lingering in his face. He was the same genial, generous, merry-eyed man at seventy-seven as Jarvis painted him nearly fifty years before. I wish always to remember him as I saw him at that last moment."[1]

Having glanced in at Sunnyside, and listened to the conversation of its venerable occupant, we must now retire to the narrator's point of view, and resume our history.

The year 1853 was one of extensive travel, in the hope of regaining health by a change of scene and total abstinence from literary occupations. A visit to Virginia in company with the Kennedys was so agreeable, that it was repeated later in the season. Saratoga was found too bustling for the

[1] The Independent, Nov. 24, 1859.

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overtasked mind; and a trip to Ogdensburg brought on a violent fever, accompanied by delirium.

The following year found the old man in better health, but not exempt from infirmities. A visit to Willis in his poetical retreat at Idlewild was one of the most pleasing events of the year. The summer was passed entirely at home, as its comforts had become a necessity even to the life-long traveller.

In February, 1855, Irving collected a number of his magazine-sketches into a volume entitled "Wolfert's Roost." The title was derived from the name which he had first given to Sunnyside,—the Roost, or Rest. The first article consisted of three chronicles of the place, from its occupation by Wolfert Acker, one of the privy councillors of Stuyvesant, down to the time of its becoming the retreat of Diedrich Knickerbocker. Although all the articles had previously been printed, they had shared the fate of most fugitive pieces, and were, at the date of their republication, as fresh as if published for the first time. The volume was at once classed among the best of Irving's writings. "Washington Irving is here, as he always is," says an English critic, "equal to himself. He has the finish of our best writers; he has the equality and gentle humor of Addison and Goldsmith."[1]

[1] Westminster Review, April, 1855, p. 310.

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The first volume of "The Life of Washington," so long in preparation, followed soon after "Wolfert's Roost." Irving was greatly depressed about it, and would not look at the book after it was printed. Not until the universal praise with which it was greeted reached his ears, and roused him to a consciousness of his success, did he feel that it was meritorious. Among the first indications of public appreciation was a letter from the historian Bancroft, who had broken in upon his sleep at both ends to finish reading the volume. "You have the peculiarity," he says in this letter, "of writing from the heart, enchaining sympathy as well as commanding confidence; the happy magic that makes scenes, events, and personal anecdotes, present themselves to you at your bidding, and fall into their natural places, and take color and warmth from your own nature. The style, too, is masterly, clear, easy, and graceful, — picturesque without mannerism, and ornamented without losing simplicity." This letter served to relieve the "nightmare solicitude" that had agitated him; and he resolved to complete the work, instead of closing with the inauguration of Washington, as was his first intention. So animated was he in the prosecution of his plan, that he declared, "I live only in the Revolution. I have no other existence now; can think of nothing else. My desire is to give every thing vividly, but to

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avoid all melodramatic effect. I wish the incidents to be brought out strongly, and speak for themselves; but no hubbub of language, no trickery of phrase, nothing wrought up."

In the spring of 1855 Irving was thrown from his saddle-horse, sustaining such injuries that his friends were apprehensive of their proving fatal. For two days he was confined to his bed, and could not be moved without great pain. When asked how he felt, he replied, in his characteristic way, "I feel as if an attempt had been made to force my head down into my chest, as you shut up a spyglass." On the third day he proved his vitality by rising, dressing, and shaving himself, — no small feat for a man of seventy-two, after his body had been wrenched and bruised by such a fall.

The second volume of "The Life of Washington" was issued in December of the same year. It was received with even more favor than the first, as the story had reached a stage of deeper interest. Prescott wrote to him soon after its appearance, "You have done with Washington just as I thought you would; and, instead of a cold marble statue of a demigod, you have made him a being of flesh and blood like ourselves, — one with whom we can have sympathy. The general sentiment of the country has been too decidedly expressed for you to doubt for a moment that this is the portrait

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of him which is to hold a permanent place in the national gallery."

During the preparation of the third volume he was annoyed with the apprehension that he would never finish the work. He feared that his brain would fail him before he had brought it to completion. Every encroachment upon his time made him nervous, and his correspondence became especially vexatious. "Oh these letters! these letters!" he exclaimed: "they tear my mind from me in slips and ribbons." The third volume appeared in July, 1856; and yet the task was little more than half done. The words he had penned in "The History of New York," in admonition of the aged Knickerbocker, now sounded in his ears as a solemn warning: "Is not Time, relentless Time, shaking with palsied hand his almost exhausted hourglass before thee? Hasten, then, to pursue thy weary task, lest the sands be run ere thou hast finished thy 'History of the Manhattoes.'"

The fourth volume was issued in May, 1857. It brought from Prescott the statement that he had never before comprehended the character of Washington. Encouraged by such high praise, the failing old man labored energetically upon his colossal task, never losing sight of the almost exhausted hourglass. But the work proceeded more slowly than before. Catarrh and asthma

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combined to afflict him, and sleepless nights filled his mind with horrors. So nervous had he become, that he often passed the entire night without once closing his eyes in sleep. His physician and his nephew sat up with him, and strove to soothe his nerves with opiates and agreeable conversation. He at last became horrified at the thought of returning night, and could not endure the prospect of lonely wakefulness through the weary watches. His sleep was caught in little naps on the sofa, surrounded by his friends. His countenance became thin and haggard, and his family saw with emotion that the sands were running low. Yet his mind gleamed forth from his wasted body, bright and radiant, shedding upon all a mellow light of gentleness and humor. A shudder at the thought of a sleepless night would be followed by a burst of sportive gayety, as if ashamed that his troubles should cast a gloom over his friends. His intellect retained its brilliancy of conception, and amid his sufferings he would pour forth a stream of anecdote that equalled the fascinating conversation of his prime. He read much, and was appreciative of merit in the volumes that were sent him by scores. The new histories of Bancroft and Prescott were eagerly read while they were still damp from the press, and called forth the warmest encomiums from him. "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" pleased him

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exceedingly; and he said of the author, "Holmes has a full, rich vein,—so witty, and so much drollery!" Of Poe's "Raven" he said, "What a capital hit that was! such a strange, weird interest in it!"

The preface for the fifth and last volume of his great biography was written on the day before his seventy-sixth birthday,—April 2, 1859. The following day was celebrated at Sunnyside by his loving household in a quiet but impressive manner. The dinner-table was profusely decked with flowers brought in by his faithful old gardener and kind friends in the neighborhood. All strove to be cheerful, and the old man not least. As he saw the flowers brought in his honor, "Beautiful flowers," he said, "to a withered old man!" At the close of the meal he was attacked with a spasm of coughing which drove him from the room, when all rose from the table in tears.

"The Life of Washington" was, as he had wished, his "crowning work;" and, as his friend William C. Preston wrote, it was a "noble capital for his literary column." Its qualities as a piece of literary workmanship are well pointed out in the following passage from Henry T. Tuckerman:—

"Without swerving from his original plan, he has faithfully told the facts, avoided with consummate skill the discussion of mooted questions, kept strictly to his sphere

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of biography, — giving exactly enough about the French Revolution, alliance, and difficulties, Jay's treaty and its consequences, Jefferson's intrigues, Genet's impertinence, the state of parties and the course of opinion, as was absolutely necessary to explain Washington's position, difficulties, and conduct, and nothing more. And he keeps the hero himself constantly in view; treats of events as they affect him, and not general history: in a word, throughout the work he makes us partake of the consciousness of Washington, more than the sentiment of party or the theories of politicians. It is as the squabbles of his cabinet, the sarcasms of the press, the events in Europe, influence his peace, purposes, and feelings, that we know them; and, by thus rendering domestic and foreign affairs subordinate to the delineation of his great subject, the harmony, unity, and clear significance of the biography are admirably preserved."[1]

Bryant says of the work, —

"I confess, my admiration of this work becomes the greater the more I examine it. In the other writings of Irving are beauties which strike the reader at once. In this I recognize qualities which lie deeper, and which I was not sure of finding, — a rare equity of judgment; a large grasp of the subject; a profound philosophy, independent of philosophical forms, and even instinctively rejecting them; the power of reducing an immense crowd of loose materials to clear and orderly arrangement, and forming them into one grand whole, as a skilful commander, from a rabble of raw recruits, forms a disciplined army animated and moved by a single will."[2]

[1] Life and Letters, vol. iv. pp. 291, 292.
[2] Orations and Addresses, pp. 145, 146.

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On the 27th of November, 1859, Irving attended divine services at Christ Church, Tarrytown. On the following day he walked in his fields, according to his custom. From his dining-room window, which looked out upon the noble Hudson, he watched one of the most gorgeous sunsets that he had ever beheld. The western sky was curtained with crimson clouds, and the soft radiance of Indian summer enveloped the landscape. He saw the sun go down behind the hills for the last time. On retiring he said, "I must arrange my pillows for another weary night." Some indistinct utterances about the "end" were the last words that ever fell from his lips. With a slight cry, as of pain, he fell in the presence of his attendant; and, when the physician arrived, life was pronounced extinct. His sun had set, and not with less glory than marked the last sunset he ever witnessed. He went down, as he had wished, "with all sail set." His mind was as lucid and as vigorous as in his palmiest days; his name was honored throughout the empire of the English language; his work was finished, and his hope of immortality was fixed upon the Saviour.

The announcement of his death was an occasion of public mourning. Throughout New-York City the flags were lowered to half-mast and public assemblies passed resolutions of respect to his memory. On the day of his funeral the bells of

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his native city pealed out their mournful tones while the long procession of friends and admirers wended its way to the burial-spot in Sleepy Hollow. In the vicinity of his home the shops were closed, and the buildings draped in mourning. Nearly two thousand people, including authors, statesmen, and divines, from all parts of the nation, followed him to the grave. Thus, on the 1st of December, a day that was beautified by the soft airs and mellow tints of Indian summer, — "one of his own days," — the gentle old man was laid to sleep beside his mother in the quiet valley he had loved.

> "And ne'er did more serene repose
> Of cloud and sunshine, brook and brae,
> Round Sleepy Hollow fondly close,
> Than on its lover's burial-day."

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CHAPTER X.

THE MAN AND THE WRITER.

WHOEVER has read between the lines of the narrative of Irving's life already given, and reflected upon the contemporary criticisms of his works cited in the preceding chapters, has formed some idea of him as a man and as a writer. It may not be without profit, however, to attempt a generalization of these running inferences.

Irving appeared in the arena of letters at a time when a grand possibility of achievement was waiting for the advent of a master. Our country had not attracted the attention of the world by any notable accomplishment in literature. The enormous development of the practical side of life had absorbed nearly all the talent and genius of the nation. Our people had addressed themselves to the subjugation of a wild territory, the establishment of commercial and industrial enterprises, and the realization of a new and doubtful polity. Accordingly, the active professions had claimed all

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the vigor of our best intellects. Many of the fathers of the Republic possessed mental power and culture of a high order; but their energies were spent in the pulpit, in the class-room, at the bar, on the platform, or in the hall of legislation. Rare literary power had appeared; but it had naturally flowed into these practical channels. Franklin's state papers had been praised by one of the most justly renowned publicists of England. Joseph Dennie was a sufficiently elegant writer to win for himself, among his own countrymen, the title of "the American Addison;" but he buried himself in politics. Charles Brockden Brown had won some celebrity as a novelist of a sensational school, but ended as the editor of a political journal. Jonathan Edwards had gained an honored place among the world's profoundest metaphysicians, but figured more in philosophy than in literature. Timothy Dwight was one of the most accomplished scholars of his time, but was only an amateur in polite letters. Hence, when Irving appeared, England looked with contempt upon every thing in America that aspired to a place in literature. Francis Jeffrey opened his review of "The Sketch-Book" with the following expression of surprise that its author was an American: —

"Though this is a very pleasing book in itself, and displays no ordinary reach of thought, and elegance of fancy, it is not exactly on that account that we are now tempted

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to notice it as a very remarkable publication, and to predict that it will form an era in the literature of the nation to which it belongs. It is the work of an American, entirely bred and trained in that country, — originally published within its territory, and, as we understand, very extensively circulated and very much admired among its natives. Now, the most remarkable thing in a work so circumstanced certainly is, that it should be written throughout with the greatest care and accuracy, and worked up to great purity and beauty of diction, on the model of the most elegant and polished of our native writers. It is the first American work, we rather think, of any description, but certainly the first purely literary production, to which we could give this praise; and we hope and trust that we may hail it as the harbinger of a purer and juster taste, the foundation of a chaster and better school, for the writers of that great and intelligent country." [1]

Poe has hinted that Irving's fame would be perceptibly diminished if a distinction were made between his intrinsic merits and the fortuitous advantage of appearing at an auspicious moment. The same may be said, with equal truth, of every conspicuous man who has embraced a great opportunity. It requires both an opportunity and a man to produce success; but the predominant force is always the man. "At the time of Mr. Irving's first publication in England," says an anonymous writer, "the reviewer's den was surrounded with the bones of American authors, as Doubting Castle was with those of the pilgrims;

[1] Edinburgh Review, August, 1820, p. 160.

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but Old Ebony became tamed by the Western Orpheus, and, relaxing his teeth, explained himself by a figure from 'Comus:' 'The genius of Mr. Irving has smoothed the raven down of *censure* till it smiled.'" While it is true that other writers have since arisen who might have won the admiration of England as the first worthy American author, if Irving had not already taken that position, there were also others before him, and contemporary with him, who had the same opportunity to gain this distinction. They did not gain it; and we may repeat the language of Alexander H. Everett, written fifty years ago: "It can never be disputed, that the mild and beautiful genius of Irving was the morning-star that led up the march of our heavenly host; and that he has a fair right—much fairer, certainly, than the great Mantuan—to assume the proud device, *Primus ego in patriam.*"

It requires no deep psychological analysis to discover the proximate sources and qualities of Irving's personal and literary power. Few eminent men have been so frank and open in their lives, or so spontaneous in their art. True, there lies hidden beneath the reach of the most searching analysis that mysterious force called genius; but in him it is unaccompanied by those consciously elaborated theories which shape the efforts of most literary artists. To dissect the inborn potency of greatness, is, in our opinion, in all

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cases impossible. There is something essentially evasive, and even illusive, in it. It is more than race; it is more than environment; it is more than epoch; it is more than toil; it is more than all these combined. There is a philosophy that pretends to find life in a combination of organs, and genius in a happy grouping of faculties; but this is to describe the microscopic world by means of the naked eye. Aside from the inscrutable element in great men, however, there are certain determinable factors which give distinctness to their lives and works. In Irving these are four: (1) extraordinary sensibility to impressions from the material world; (2) a remarkable faculty of form; (3) a deficiency of analytic power; and (4) a cosmopolitan life.

His sensibility to the beauties of nature is discernible in his earliest letters; for even in these he paints the scenery of the noble Hudson and the incidents of his first travels with accuracy of detail, and warmth of color. It is not less evident in his early caricatures of society, which, while often fanciful, are sometimes vividly descriptive. It is the same quality that leads him from a vein of humor to one of pathos, when his heart is touched by misfortune; and again to one of romance, as he brings before his mind the chivalric scenes and daring adventures of Moorish and Spanish history. Irving has three distinctly-marked phases of style,

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corresponding to the external conditions in which he wrote. The first is shown in "Salmagundi" and "The History of New York," written when his sense of humor was touched by the absurdities of society and the oddities of old Dutch life in his native city. The second appears in "The Sketch-Book" and "Bracebridge Hall," composed when his heart was softened by personal bereavement and disappointment, that mellowed his humor to a graceful tenderness. The third shines out in "The Life of Columbus" and his other Spanish writings, conceived when his mind was glowing in the presence of decaying magnificence, and thrilled with the heroic deeds of old Moorish romance.

His sensibility, however, seldom attains the character of insight. It is receptive rather than penetrative. It is more like touch than vision; though his figures do not lack color. His pictures are transcripts, rather than original conceptions. His characters are such as have actually lived and moved among men, rather than ideals elaborated by the creative imagination out of the plastic elements of life. They have been seen in his travels, or have been built up by the fancy, which patches rather than creates, out of the fragmentary views furnished by old traditions or curious chronicles.

And yet what wonderful truth of detail! This also grows out of the responsiveness of his mind to

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every faint impression on the sense. He not only seizes upon every presentation of form and color in objects, but paints it as if he enjoyed it. This is because his receptive power is one of feeling as well as of apprehension. He is not merely a man of fancy, but he is also a man of sentiment. What he perceives is not coldly reflected as from a plate of burnished metal, but enters into his life, and, enriched by contact with his heart's blood, comes forth vitalized. Yet the vitalizing is not that of thought, but that of feeling. His pictures seem almost to pulsate with life; but they are still pictures, not creations.

His humor is distinguished by its constituent of feeling. It is the genial coloring of his humorous conceptions, not their mechanism, that wins our interest. He hardly ever puns; for the pun is a logical fallacy, and Irving does not play with forms of thought. His humor seldom becomes wit; for wit is the product of analytic insight, and his mind is neither analytic, nor specially gifted with insight. He often makes us smile, but seldom — especially in his later writings — elicits a broad guffaw; for his conceptions are charged with a feeling softened by culture, and tempered by geniality.

An able living critic has affirmed that "Irving's pathos is always a lamentable failure."[1] Who-

[1] George P. Lathrop.

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ever has thoughtfully read "The Widow and her Son," or "The Broken Heart," in "The Sketch-Book," or "Annette Delarbre" in "Bracebridge Hall," needs no refutation of this sweeping assertion. The following anecdote is better evidence of Irving's power of pathos than any metaphysical proof.

An American gentleman who visited Lord Byron in 1824, two months before his decease, relates this story: —

"He [Lord Byron] rose from his couch when I entered, and, pressing my hand warmly, said, 'Have you brought "The Sketch-Book?"' I handed it to him; when, seizing it with enthusiasm, he turned to 'The Broken Heart.' 'That,' said he, 'is one of the finest things ever written on earth; and I want to hear an American read it. But stay! Do you know Irving?' I replied that I had never seen him. 'God bless him!' exclaimed Byron: 'he is a genius; and he has something better than genius, — a heart. I wish I could see him; but I fear I never shall. Well, read "The Broken Heart," — yes, "The Broken Heart." What a word!'

"In closing the first paragraph, I said, 'Shall I confess it? I believe in broken hearts.' — 'Yes,' exclaimed Byron, 'and so do I, and so does everybody but philosophers and fools.' While I was reading one of the most touching portions of that mournful piece, I observed that Byron wept. He turned his eyes upon me, and said, 'You see me weep, sir. Irving himself never wrote that story without weeping; nor can I hear it without tears. I have not wept much in this world, for trouble never brings tears to my eyes; but I always have tears for "The Broken Heart." . . . Sir, how

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many such men as Washington Irving are there in America? God don't send many such spirits into this world.' "[1]

The same root of sensibility gives character to his moral and religious opinions and practices. His opinions were hardly principles; for they were less the result of reasoning than the expression of his instincts. That they were generally sound is less owing to logic than to refined and noble associations and a happy organization. His religion was late in crystallizing into a creed; for his sympathies were too broad for such restriction. His morals were never puritanical; for he was too fond of pleasure. Yet his life was pure, and his moral criteria were elevated; for his passions were moderate, and his tastes refined. He has been blamed for a want of patriotism, and heroic devotion to some great cause. His want of partisanship is conspicuous in his whole life. When engaged as a lawyer for Aaron Burr, he became his friend and admirer. When a republican diplomatist to a court that scorned his country, he was happy in aristocratic and even royal society. When others were struggling for great principles, he was a gentleman of leisure, courting the emoluments of literary fame. All this is plain enough in the light of his nature. His sympathies were too full and spontaneous in their flow to be confined in a narrow channel, either by logic or a partisan spirit.

[1] Allibone's Dictionary of Authors, article "Byron."

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His readiness to receive impressions opened his perception to the extenuating merits of all men and all institutions; and, once perceived, they entered into the reservoir of his life, to tincture all its issues of opinion or action. Accordingly, he could not be a partisan or a doctrinaire on any topic. Hence his disgust with the petty narrowness of politics, and his fondness for foreign institutions. It was not that he loved his country less, but the world more.

Literature and debauchery too often draw their nourishment from the same soil. Shakespeare, Burns, Byron, Moore, De Quincey, and a host of others, are illustrations of this fact. The same delicate nervous organization, that is ever the physical condition of genius, is often the cause of dissolute conduct. In some writers, the exercise of the pen has been a sufficient outlet for the quickened nervous life that trembles and throbs for expression in the soul of poetic genius. In others it has run riot in the excesses of sensuous gratification, leading to the wine-cup, and even deeper and more dangerous draughts of pleasure. In Irving, sensibility never becomes passion in its lower sense. His fine taste and instinctive nobility curb and guide his desires. Even love is with him a vestal fire, — ever burning, yet never blazing; shedding a mild radiance through the temple of the heart, but never flashing forth in consuming

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flames. How hallowed seems that constancy with which, to the last, he clung to the memory of that sweet spirit, that, by its flight, left his heart in perpetual loneliness! Beauty and wealth, intellect and refinement, appealed to him in vain; while the vision of her whom he had loved floated through his dreams, and her worn Bible lay beneath his lonely pillow. It is true that one who survived him strove to link her name with his as the object of his spurned affections; but the spuriousness of the claim is evident from its indelicacy. Naturally fond of the tender sex, and made, as he says, for a husband and a father, Irving went to the tomb — which for fifty years had enshrined the idol of his heart — faithful to the pledges of his early love.

Just one month after Irving, Macaulay left the scenes of earth. Thackeray, referring to their loss, penned these noble words: —

"Here are two literary men gone to their account; and, *laus Deo*, as far as we know, it is fair and open and clean. Here is no need of apologies for shortcomings, or explanations of vices which would have been virtues but for unavoidable, &c. Here are two examples of men most differently gifted; each pursuing his calling; each speaking his truth as God bade him; each honest in his life, just and irreproachable in his dealings, dear to his friends, honored by his country, beloved at his fireside. It has been the fortunate lot of both to give incalculable happiness and delight to the world; which thanks them in return with an immense kindliness, respect, affection."

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Perhaps no well-informed man and skilled writer was ever less qualified than Irving for the functions of a critic. His acute sensitiveness to pain from the ill opinion of others, joined with a peculiar tenderness for the feelings of other men, wholly incapacitated him for the work of literary censure; while his ready perception of defects, and strong ethical sentiment, restrained him from exaggerated praise. His generous treatment of other writers, many of whom were his competitors for public favor, is one of the most pleasing features of his life. Scarcely a word of disparagement can be found anywhere in his writings, or remembered from his conversation. His admiration of Prescott, to whom he surrendered a theme that was to him as the apple of his eye, was expressed on every occasion. His correspondence with Bryant reveals a kindliness of feeling, and a willingness to share the rewards of fame, delightful to contemplate in a world of literary jealousy. His appreciation of rising talent was shown by a host of encouragements to young authors. When Mr. Ticknor sent him his "History of Spanish Literature," he said, "When I have once read it through, I shall keep it by me, like a Stilton cheese, to give a dig into whenever I want a relishing morsel." When asked what he thought of Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter," — "Masterly! masterly! masterly!" was his reply. Cooper, Bancroft, Motley, Poe, and

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Donald G. Mitchell, were all objects of his admiration.

The delicate sensibility of which we have been speaking was not more marked in Irving than the faculty of form. His earliest style displays this power of his mind, and he has written nothing which does not illustrate it. His sensibility to sound, and harmony of proportion, furnished him with a test of perfection in style; but that alone would not have made him the verbal musician that he was. In the realm of style, as distinguished from invention, Irving is unsurpassed. Even here, however, he is not creative. Most of his effects, probably all, may be found in previous English writers, especially in Addison and Goldsmith. There is in his works no such originality of diction or figure as is found on almost every page of Carlyle and Emerson. The reason is plain. Irving never wrote in a furor, yet never chiselled his diction to a marble embodiment of an archetypal thought. His style surpasses that of ordinary writers of good taste chiefly in its almost faultless accuracy, its transparent clearness, its elegance of finish, and its mellifluous flow. These qualities were impressed upon it by that exquisite sense of form that enabled him at once to detect and reject a faulty expression.

It cannot be claimed for Irving that he had all the ordinary advantages for forming his style,

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though he had some that are extraordinary. His training in the classics was slender; so that he lacked the key of etymology, the classic models of antiquity, and the practice of translation from the ancient languages. These deficiencies were compensated, however, by extensive contact with highly-cultivated people, an acquaintance with several modern languages, and, above all, a devoted study of the great masters of English prose and verse. Yet he was not a conscious imitator of any one. The unerring sense of form that made the classic writers classic enabled him to surpass his masters; so that a contemporary critic said, "If a young man wishes to study a style which possesses the characteristic beauties of Addison's, its ease, simplicity, and elegance, with greater accuracy, point, and spirit, let him give his days and nights to the volumes of Irving."

Wonder has been felt by many, that one who had such a command of all the resources of expression, whose prose is the embodiment of rhythmical beauty, should not sometimes have chosen verse as his medium. This seems the more surprising when his poetic temperament, and fondness for romance, are taken into account. Why he did not select this form of writing we are not informed. It is probable that the aversion to rhyme and metre, not uncommon among potential poets, may have been operative in his case. That he could

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express himself gracefully under the restriction of metrical fetters, however, is apparent in the following verses, written in "The Deep Dene Album" in 1822: —

"Thou record of the votive throng
That fondly seek this fairy shrine,
And pay the tribute of a song
Where worth and loveliness combine, —

What boots that I, a vagrant wight
From clime to clime still wandering on,
Upon thy friendly page should write?
Who'll think of me when I am gone?

Go plough the wave, and sow the sand;
Throw seed to every wind that blows·
Along the highway strew thy hand,
And fatten on the crop that grows,

For even thus the man that roams
On heedless hearts his feeling spends,
Strange tenant of a thousand homes,
And friendless with ten thousand friends.

Yet here for once I'll leave a trace
To ask in after-times a thought,
To say that here a resting-place
My way-worn heart has fondly sought.

So the poor pilgrim heedless strays
Unmoved through many a region fair,
But at some shrine his tribute pays,
To tell that he has worshipped there."

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The rhythmical flow of Irving's prose is often perfectly metrical, and would pass for blank-verse if written in the manner of poetry. The following passage from "The History of New York" is given without the alteration of a word. As here printed, it appears in iambic pentameter verse, with no syllable that could not be defended by a parallel from the epic poets.

"The gallant warrior starts from soft repose,
From golden visions and voluptuous ease,
Where, in the dulcet 'piping time of peace,'
He sought sweet solace after all his toils.
No more in beauty's siren lap reclined
He weaves fair garlands for his lady's brows,
No more intwines with flowers his shining sword,
Nor through the livelong lazy summer's day
Chants forth his love-sick soul in madrigals.
To manhood roused, he spurns the amorous flute;
Doffs from his brawny back the robe of peace,
And clothes his pampered limbs in panoply of steel.
O'er his dark brow, where late the myrtle waved,
Where wanton roses breathed enervate love,
He rears the beaming casque and nodding plumes,
Grasps the bright shield, and shakes the ponderous lance;
Or mounts with eager pride his fiery steed,
And burns for deeds of glorious chivalry."[1]

Not only in the details of language, but in the arrangement and correlation of his materials, does Irving's fine faculty of form display itself. Re-

[1] Chap. i. book vi.

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casting constituted a large part of his literary labor. Interpolations and erasures were common in all his writings. Whole passages were often rejected, and new ones written, while his books were passing through the press. Manuscripts were sometimes destroyed because they could not be brought to a state of artistic finish that the author could approve. In "The Life of Washington," he was vexed at times almost to desperation at the desultory character of the incidents that seemed to defy his efforts for the picturesque grouping which his mind demanded.

It is remarkable how readily Irving utilizes every source of literary material. An old legend, an incident of travel, a chance reflection, a verse of poetry, an idle fancy, an ancient custom, an aspect of nature, a moss-grown memory, takes root in his fertile mind, and blossoms into an essay or a volume. Others see humor, beauty, and pathos in their daily surroundings; but all those mental states which in common minds remain in solution, in his precipitate in verbal crystals.

Both by nature and by education, Irving was deficient in analytic power. As a schoolboy, he found his tasks in arithmetic difficult and irksome. His deficiency in mathematical skill, however, is not proof of his inferiority in that variety of logic necessary in the highest literary art. But metaphysical studies, which alone furnish that kind of

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training essential to profound literary construction, entered neither into his education nor his amateur pursuits. His tastes were in no sense analytic. He lacked not only the power of continuity of thought, but that reflex action of mind, so conspicuous in Hawthorne, that leads to psychological exploration and discovery. The higher problems of existence, intellectual or ethical, never troubled him. He even affected to scorn philosophy. He reached his conclusions through the medium of his tastes, and the dicta of authorities, rather than by syllogisms or formal induction. His life was too extensively objective to be intensely subjective.

As a result of this constitution and habit of mind, his productions are descriptions and narratives, never disquisitions. He deals in pictures, not in arguments. He tells us what things are, never why they are. He is everywhere the artist, nowhere the philosopher. Hence he wrote no novels in the strict sense of the word. The novel requires the analysis of character, the construction of plot, the adjustment of numberless details in a continuous fabric of thought. For all this he was by nature and by training incapacitated.

His biographies are his longest productions; "The Life of Washington" being his longest. In this work he exhibits his greatest power of intel-

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lect. Even here he is greater in detail than in conception. His work was extended piecemeal, and did not grow from a germ plan. Its unity (for this it has) is that of the imagination, rather than of thought. Its incidents crystallize round a man rather than round a principle. This is the true method of biography, but not of the highest form of history. For philosophical history Irving had no aptitude. Even in biography he appears at his best where the details are few, and where he grasps the idea of his subject rather by his sympathies than by his intuitions of cause and effect. In "The Life of Goldsmith" he has given us one of the most charming biographies ever written. His success, apart from his felicity of style, is owing to his perfect sympathy with the man. A more logical mind would be puzzled with the inconsistencies of Goldsmith's character, and become entangled in metaphysical theories for their reconciliation. Irving reconciles all these differences in his heart rather than in his head, and makes us forget them by forgetting them himself.

As a dramatist it is doubtful if he could ever have succeeded. He gave evidence of this in his partnership with Payne. His touches in revision imparted elegance to the dialogue, with an occasional infusion of humor; but the managers found fault with the plots. They were for the closet rather than for the stage. Payne probably fur-

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nished the fire; but between the two there was a lack of passion such as the stage requires. Irving, like Milton, was too much of an artist for a dramatist. He could not narrow himself into a variety of characters by subjective illusion.

His lack of analytic power explains the absence of conscious moral purpose in his works. His writings are spiritually healthful, but not by intention. They happen to be so because of his intrinsic nobility. Had a sense of a final cause in his productions been more conspicuous, he would probably have been a moralist; for his purposes, such as they were, were good. Had a strong arm of logic held before his eyes the miseries of the world and their rational remedies, he would have entered the arena as a knight of reform. But the follies and sufferings of men were never connected in his mind by such a process of reasoning as to convince him of their causes and their cures. Failing thus to connect social factors and social wrongs, he never commended a creed, or advocated a theory. By no means indifferent to the ills of humanity, he left the race to solve its own problems without his advice. For this silence he has been blamed, and shares, in the estimation of the strong-minded, in the character of his "golden-hearted man," whom Carlyle reproachfully calls "the pretty-story-telling Walter Scott."

Nowhere in his writings is there a trace of any

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attempt to philosophize on the laws or methods of literary art. The extravaganza on "The Art of Book-Making," in "The Sketch-Book," is a satire on literary piracy, but contains no theories of literary workmanship. Probably he had no theories of good writing corresponding to the speculations of such metaphysicians as Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Poe. No doubt he had formulated some empirical rules, based on his extensive experience in writing; but it is doubtful if he could have defended these with substantial reasons, had they been called in question. The only remark that occurs to our mind, bearing upon the technics of composition, is an incidental complaint in one of his private letters, that an American publisher had used too many commas in printing some of his sketches, thereby interrupting the flow of the language in reading.

One of the most important factors of Irving's career was his cosmopolitan life. No American, and scarcely any man of any age, has been more truly a citizen of the world. Even in youth he was a traveller in foreign lands, and was a wanderer most of his life. He spoke the leading languages of Europe, and was conversant with the polite portion of their literatures. He was acquainted with the leading men of his time in all countries, including authors, actors, statesmen, diplomatists, and even princes, kings, and queens.

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His life embraced the experiences of the cottage and the palace, the wild scenes of the frontier and the splendors and ceremonies of courts. He lived long enough in the principal countries of Europe to enter into sympathy with their forms of society and government.

It is not strange that he should be charged with a want of nationality in his works. It has been said that an Englishman might have written any of his books, while Cooper was distinctively a republican and an American. It has even been denied that Irving is an American author, and he has been claimed as an English classic.[1] This denial involves the gross assumption, that an American author must be *un*-English; for the reason assigned is, that an Englishman might have written his books. It is difficult to see why America does not inherit the English language, and even English methods of art, as justly as English blood; and if we are now Americans, and not Englishmen, the literature produced by our writers is American, and not English. The mother-country has no right to arrogate to herself the products of American soil because the seed-grain was nurtured in hers. No one can deny that the germs of nearly everything American are of English origin; but the native growth is entitled to a new name. If Irving is worthy of rank as an English classic, it

[1] Powell's Living Authors of America, p. 9.

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is because genius can thrive in the New World as well as in the Old. If an Englishman could write any thing that Irving has written, he could write any thing that Cooper has written if transferred to the primitive forests of America. Americans do not claim to be autochthones, and the best Englishmen recognize them as "kin beyond sea."

But Irving justly claims a measure of nationality in his works, apart from the question of his nativity. His writings have just that kind of nationality that is meritorious in works of art: they are true in their local coloring. The sketches of "Rip Van Winkle" and "Sleepy Hollow," and the "Knickerbocker History," could not have been written out of America by one who had never lived in the country.

But there is a greater quality than nationality, which, after all, is nothing but an enlarged provincialism. On English soil, Irving showed to Englishmen the humor and pathos of their own life as they had not yet seen it in literature. In Spain his genius is again naturalized, and catches the lingering spirit of the past from the airs of Granada. There is something generic about his mind, something nobler than a specific narrowness that cannot venture, or does not care, to overstep the precincts of the hearthstone. Yet Irving could specialize himself with a change of environment. In the animal world, the higher the order of being,

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the wider the distribution of the species; and, while man can live and thrive in any climate where food can be procured, the lower animals are confined by barriers of temperature. Irving may well bear the odium of small nationality for the glory of an ample range. He belongs to that nobler species of writers who make the world their home, and mankind their friends.

While he was not constrained by local interests or partisan motives, he did not lack true individuality both as a man and as a writer. He was invariably himself, not the shadow of another. He ventured on all occasions to act according to his own views and feelings, and not as others acted. While he thought the war with Great Britain petty and inconsequential, he held aloof from it. When he became convinced that his country was in danger, and felt the disgrace of the capture of Washington, he spoke with fearless indignation, and rushed into the army with courage and enthusiasm. As a writer, he displayed the same independence of character. He avoided the novel as a form of literature because it was too common. His sketches, and mode of publication, were *sui generis*. He could not confine himself to translation, because the result would not bear the impress of his own mind. He would not sell his services to a party organ in whose principles he did not believe.

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His independence cannot be referred to a dominant self-assertion, as distinguished from true individuality. His nature was retiring, even to the point of embarrassment and positive discomfort to himself. He was hardly a resolute man, much less boldly aggressive in thought or action. His individuality was not that of will, but of organization; not that of power, but of character. No projectile passion deflected him from the graceful curve in which the even gravity of his tastes ever moved him. Hence he seems to lack distinctive traits. He certainly is devoid of those phenomenal peculiarities that mark most other writers. He is unique, nevertheless, for a combination of graces seldom united. His symbol in nature is neither the volcano flaming with unexpected outbursts, nor the meteor flashing across the solemn gloom of the midnight sky: it is the iridescent arch of the rainbow, unsurpassed in beauty, but a form rather than a force.

What an inheritance we have in the volumes of Irving! How many hours of pure delight has he given his thousands of readers! We have laughed with Scott over the sleepy serenity of Walter the Doubter, and the waspish energy of William the Testy; we have wept with Byron over the deep-toned requiem of "The Broken Heart;" we have puzzled our brains over the provoking mystery of "The Stout Gentleman;" we have seen the inte-

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rior of literary London in "Buckthorne and his Friends;" we have followed with tense-strung nerves the perilous voyages of Christopher Columbus; we have dwelt with moist eyes on King Boabdil's last farewell to his marble halls at Granada; we have mused with pensive spirit over the desolate grandeur of the Alhambra; we have watched the star of hope alternately pale and gleam through the clouds that overshadowed the career of our own Washington: but, among all the scenes and characters that have charmed or melted our souls in the varied panorama, there is nothing that lingers more sweetly in our memory, or that has left a warmer glow about the heart, than the central figure of all, the beloved Father of American Letters,—Washington Irving.

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